WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

MERCY WARREN

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WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

MERCY WARREN

BY ALICE BROWN

WITH PORTRAIT

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TO

THE DESCENDANTS

OF

MERCY OTIS WARREN

AT

PLYMOUTH AND AT DEDHAM

PREFACE

There are few consecutive incidents, save the catalogue of births, marriages, and deaths, to be gathered concerning the life of Mercy Otis Warren. Therefore it seems necessary to regard her through those picturesque events of the national welfare which touched her most nearly, and of which she was a part. It is impossible to trace her, step by step, through her eighty-six years; she can only be regarded by the flash-light of isolated topics.

In compiling this sketch of the Revolutionary period, I am especially indebted to Winslow Warren, Esq., and Charles Francis Adams, Esq., for their generosity and courtesy in allowing me the use of the valuable manuscripts in their possession. I have also to make grateful acknowledgment to the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society; the Life of James Otis, by William Tudor; the Life of Thomas Hutchinson, by James K. Hosmer; a History

of American Literature, by Moses Coit Tyler; American Literature, by C. F. Richardson; the Governor's Garden, by George R. R. Rivers; to all Mrs. Alice Morse Earle's delightful pictures of a by-gone day, and to scores of books so vivid or so accurate as to have become the commonplace of reference.

A. B.

BOSTON, *October 3, 1896.*

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MERCY WARREN

I

IN THE BEGINNING

Mercy Otis Warren belongs to that vital period when there came between the two Englands, New and Old, the breaking of ancient bonds, the untwining of fibres grown from the hearts of each; she was born at a day when the Colonies were outwardly stanch in allegiance, and she lived through the first irritation preluding wrath "with one we love," to defection, victory, and peace. In time, in feeling and influence, her life kept pace, step for step, with the growth of a nation.

Throughout the first youth of our Colonies, New England was still the willing daughter of her motherland. To every pilgrim settled here, and even to his children, born in a species of exile, it was "home;" and few were they who quite relinquished hope of returning thither, either for travel, study, or the renewal of precious associations. Indeed, spite of the ful-

filment of desire in having reached that air of freedom for which they so long had fainted, our forebears honestly felt with Cotton Mather: "I conclude of the two Englands what our Saviour saith of the two wines: 'No man having tasted of the old, presently desireth the new; for he saith, the old is better.'" Thus identified in recent life and ever-present longing, there is some special savor in tracing family descent at a period when every bud was near the parent stem; for, in the beginning of our stock, it is possible to catch some lustre cast by Old World culture and beauty, the while you detect the hardening of sinews responsive to the stimulus of Old World wrongs.

The ancestry of Mercy Otis took rise in that hardy yeomanry which has ever been the bulwark and strength of England. John Otis, founder of the American branch to which she belongs, is usually believed to have been born in Barnstaple, Devon, whence he came to Hingham, of the Massachusetts, in 1635, and there drew lots in the first division of land. This incident of the allotment of land is virtually the first mention of him; and because it took place in the company of the Rev. Peter Hobart and his twenty-nine associates, it has been conjectured that, like all the band, Otis came from Hingham in Norfolk. It may

be, however, that he left Devon and lived for a time at Hingham before embarking for America. Or, if the genealogical ferret would run down a further quibble, he may scent it in a note among the Hingham records, of land granted John Otis in June; and whereas Hobart only arrived at Charlestown in June, and did not proceed to Hingham until September, John Otis was very evidently there before him.

The name, as it crops out in old records both here and in England, is variously spelled as Ottis, Otys, Ote, Otye, and Oatey; but happily it is not to be identified with the one-syllabled Otes relegated to Titus of unholy memory. Thus varied, it appears significantly in the Subsidy Rolls, — a quantity of most precious manuscript, preserved at the Rolls Office in London, and brought thither from the Tower, where it lay for more than two hundred years, rich in truthful records which are now invaluable. Therein are set down the names and residences of most English people from the time of Henry VIII. to that of Charles II., — a means whereby the genealogist may occasionally put his finger on the still-beating pulses of the past. It is a trivial fact that among the Somerset families appears, under several forms, the name Otis; yet when snapped into another isolated record, it completes an unbroken chain

of inference. For there was one Richard Otis of Glastonbury, who, in 1611, gave, according to the terms of his will, all his wearing apparel to his sons Stephen and John. Now, was this the John who afterwards made his temporary stay in Devon or Norfolk, and then found his last home in America?

Apparently it was; and here is the pretty reason for such guesswork. On the fourth of June, 1636, there were granted to our John Otis of Hingham, in the Massachusetts, sixteen acres of land, and also ten acres for planting ground *on Weari-All-Hill.* That name alone is significant. Says the historian of Hingham, relative to the latter grant: "It is very steep upon its western slope, and from this cause known to the early settlers, in their quaintly expressive nomenclature, as Weary-All-Hill." But the reason is possibly further to seek than in the spontaneous fancy of the town fathers; for it goes back to England and to Glastonbury town. Every pilgrim to Glaston knows the step ascent, lined now with houses built of the severe gray stone so common there (much of it filched from the ruined Abbey), at the top of which is a grassy enclosure, and a little slab to mark the spot where Joseph of Arimathea rested when, with his disciples, he stayed his wanderings in Glastonbury and built there a

little wattled church, the mother of England's worship. On the top of Weary-All-Hill he struck his staff, a thorn-branch, into the earth; and it burst into bloom, the first of all the famous thorns to blossom thereafter at Christmas time. The hill was and is a beloved and significant feature of the town, and without a doubt John Otis named his New England hill in memory of it, and so proved himself in the doing a Glaston man. It is quite true that a Devonian might have been perfectly familiar with Weary-All-Hill in "Zummerzett," or that the name might have been evolved from its significance alone; but I like best to think it a fragrant reminiscence of home, like the bit of soil an exile bears jealously from the mother sod.

In loyalty to the romance which is truer than truth, let us believe that John Otis sprang from Glastonbury, and trace in his temperament the serious cast of that dignified, and rich yet melancholy landscape, the outward frame of a spot ever to be reverenced as the nursery of ecclesiastical power. One might even guess what dreams he dreamed, and what images haunted him, when he turned the mind's vision backward over sea. There they lie, as he saw them, the fertile fields of Somerset, the peaty meadows cut by black irrigating ditches; now,

as then, Glastonbury Tor rises like a beacon, Saint Michael's Tower its crown. Yet Glastonbury is not wholly the same. One vital change has befallen it: the wounds of its sacred spot show some semblance of healing, for now the jewelled ruins of the Abbey are touched with rose and yellow sedum, and the mind, through long usage, has accustomed herself to the evidences of spoil and loss. But when John Otis sailed for America, it was less than a hundred years since Henry VIII. had set his greedy mark upon the Abbey; less than a century only since Richard Whiting, last Abbot of Glastonbury, had mounted the Tor to die in sight of his desecrated church and all the kingdoms of the earth for which he would not renounce the crown of his integrity. There are periods when history marches swiftly; and such vivid events as these were the folk-tales heard by John Otis at the fireside and in his twilight walks.

But if, before his flitting to America, he did remove from Glastonbury to Barnstaple, in Devon, the change in mental atmosphere was distinct and bracing, from a sacerdotal to a thriving merchant town, where minds had not yet done thrilling, since Elizabeth's day, with dreams of adventure and trade with the "golden South Americas." The little parish church, as

you may see it there, on any present pilgrimage, is full of significant hints of the manner of men who built it, worshipped under its roof, and then claimed shelter for their last long rest. The walls are lined with mortuary tablets, testimonial to the good burghers who, having done famously in life, gave munificent alms for the poor to come after them, and doubtless also as a cake to Cerberus, thus forwarding the safe passage of their own thrifty souls. There were men of mark in Barnstaple; let it be assumed that Otis was of them. But wherever he started in life, he took root in our Hingham, and doubtless did his share in building up the sturdy independence so characteristic of the place. For this Colony was on the outskirts both of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, and it owned not too entire an allegiance to any but its own judgment, nor brooked interference.

Hingham was a hot-bed of individualism, and it can never be mentioned without remembrance of one vivid scene connected with its early days, — one of those commonplaces of the time destined to fructify and thus endure. In 1645, a novel case came before the General Court of Boston, founded primarily on dissension in the town of Hingham over the choice of a captain for its trainband. Variance spread, hot words

abounded, and some of the delinquents were summoned to Boston to answer for their indiscretion before the General Court. Old Peter Hobart violently espoused their cause, as against the magistrates, and expostulated so boldly with the latter that they grew wroth, and replied that if he were not a minister of the gospel he should be committed. Thereupon the warfare continued through the requirements of the magistrates and the virtual refusal of the Hinghamites to do anything whatsoever which they might be bid, especially to appear meekly for trial; and finally the latter rose with boldness, and, crying that their liberties had been infringed upon by the General Court, singled out John Winthrop, the Deputy-Governor, for prosecution.

No scene more picturesque and impressive belongs to this stirring time than that of John Winthrop, stepping down from his official station, and sitting uncovered, in dignified acquiescence, "beneath the bar." The case turned upon the question of the power of the magistrates, and the possibility of their endangering the liberties of the people through over-much arrogance. The Deputy-Governor was acquitted, but, after taking his place again upon the bench, "he desired leave for a little speech;" and then was uttered his wonderful exordium upon

liberty, destined to live in the minds and ears of the people so long as they shall love just thought and noble expression. He began with these fit and burning words: —

"There is a twofold liberty, natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal," and after defining the first, went on to that other higher, spiritual liberty, the "civil or federal; it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions among men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty to that only which is good, just and honest. This liberty you are to stand for, with the hazard (not only of your goods, but) of your lives, if need be."

And so was the stiff-backed Hingham of the time responsible for an enduring piece of thought, a noble moral precedent.

In those days, the minister was the man of mark; and Peter Hobart proved himself doubly the leader of feeling in this exigency, not only from his position, but from his almost aggressive individuality. It is significant to read, in another instance, the verdict of the time upon him, and to realize how strongly he must have influenced his people to independence, even

though it led to revolt. In 1647, a marriage was to be celebrated in Boston, and, as the bridegroom was a member of "Hobard's" church, "Hobard" was invited to preach, and indeed went to Boston for that purpose. But the magistrates ordered him to forbear, saying plainly, "That his spirit had been discovered to be adverse to our ecclesiastical and civil government, and he was a bold man, and *would speak his mind.*"

From the concerted action of the time, it is possible to guess the individual; from the public attitude of the town of Hingham, to imagine what spirit animated its citizens. This was the air breathed by our yeoman Otis; the social atmosphere which he doubtless did his part to preserve clarified, bracing, free. And no one who has followed the line of his descendants can doubt that he also could "speak his mind."

From John Otis was descended, in the fifth generation, Mercy Otis, the third among thirteen children. She was born September 25, 1728, at Barnstable, Massachusetts, whither John, son of the first John, had moved in 1678, to build his house on land known thereafter as Otis Farm. It belonged to that part of the town called Great Marshes, now the West Parish, or West Barnstable. When it

comes to guessing out life-history from external evidence, every spot identified with family life becomes significant; for nature, even in her common phases, holds deep meaning, which the growing soul inevitably absorbs. Personal history becomes, to a vast extent, topographical, provided only a family line has grown and thriven in one spot. Given the sensitive, impressionable temperament, and it is possible to say, "Show me the landscape, and I will show you the man." To be born in Barnstable means to be born on Cape Cod,—potent phrase to those who know, either by birthright or hearsay, that strong and righteous arm of Massachusetts.

Barnstable has no thrilling story; she has always held herself in self-respecting quiet, ready to meet public questions, or content to be of the happy nations that have no history, save of industry and thrift. She had rich resources, and in 1639 they attracted the Rev. John Lothrop, who moved thither with his congregation. She owned her land honestly by just though thrifty bargain with the Indians (what though it be recorded that thirty acres went for "two brass kettles, one bushel of Indian corn," and the fence to enclose the tract? When we sell for a song, sometimes the song outweighs the purchase). All the peculiar beauties des-

tined to make Cape Cod so unique and lovable were hers: the scrubby growth of pine and oak crowning the knolls, fair little valleys, great marshes where the salt grass sprang, sweet fresh-water ponds dotting the inland tracts, and, at her door, the sea, challenger to fear and purveyor of good, — insistent, mighty, inducing in men that hardy habit and longing which belong as truly to Cape Cod as to Devon. "The duck does not take to water with a surer instinct than the Barnstable [County] boy," says a local historian. "He leaps from his leading strings into the shrouds. It is but a bound from the mother's lap to the mast-head. He boxes the compass in his infant soliloquies. He can hand, reef, and steer by the time he flies a kite."

Of Mercy Otis's dozen brothers and sisters, three deserve especial remembrance. One, the eldest, was James Otis, the patriot. The second, Joseph, held various important positions during Revolutionary days, and gave his country definite and picturesque service in opposing the attempt of the English to destroy a privateer which had sought refuge in Barnstable harbor. Samuel Allyne, one of the younger sons, founded a memorable house; for he married Elizabeth, daughter of the Honorable Harrison Gray, and their son was Harrison Gray Otis.

To the New England ear comes no sweeter sound than the hint of Mayflower ancestry; there is, moreover, somewhat of a superstitious savor in it, and the historian licks his lips at the possibility, as though some pious salt had touched them. Therefore let it be said with reverence that the mother of Mercy Otis belonged to that sacred strain. She was Mary Allyne, great-granddaughter of Edward Doten, or Dotey, who came over in 1620; and, being fortunate in topographical conditions, she was doubly well-born, — for she entered this earthly stage in the old Allyne house at Plymouth. No wonder she is designated "a woman of superior character." When it comes to the Mayflower with Plymouth in conjunction, *noblesse oblige.*

The name Mercy (or Marcia, as Mercy Otis sometimes spelled it) was a favorite one in the family. It keeps cropping out, from generation to generation, like some small plant that runs and flowers on the wall. The line begins with Mercy Bacon of Barnstable, the wife of John Otis, grandson of the first John. This Mercy had a daughter named for her, and her husband's two brothers had each a daughter Mercy; and so did two of the next generation. Indeed, one of those sons had two Mercys, one little girl having died a baby. Quite evidently the

name was a source of love, as it afterwards became of pride to the succeeding generations, when they could look back on the woman who virtually made it her own, through significance of life and thought.

II

BARNSTABLE DAYS

First of all, one would fain know something about the little Mercy Otis, instead of reconstructing a shadowy image from the outer circumstances of other childhood at that time. We want the magic mirror wherein events grow clear. There are those who had it. Such, according to Hawthorne, was old Esther Dudley of the Province House, the weird woman who habited there in the interregnum after Howe left and before Hancock came in. Who would not bargain for her uncanny power! —

"It was the general belief that Esther could cause the governors of the overthrown dynasty, — with the beautiful ladies who had once adorned their festivals, the Indian chiefs who had come up to the Province House to hold counsel or swear allegiance, the grim Provincial warriors, the severe clergymen, — in short, all the pageantry of gone days, all the pictures that ever swept across the broad plate of glass in former times, — she could cause the whole to reappear, and people the inner world of the mirror with shadows of old life."

Such a mirror do I want, and such an enchantress, to summon up the figure of one modest Colonial maiden; and such a mirror have we not.

The first daughter of the family, little Mercy had that trying position of over-much affection at the start, and later, the responsibility of action and example when the house became crowded with young life. It is easy to imagine her trotting about with her ugly home-made doll (or hoarding worshipfully one of the toys so sparingly sold in Boston, at that early date, thence to reach the country towns on some market journey), a quaint little figure like all the child-figures of the time, with long skirt, and a close cap to protect her head from the searching Cape winds fighting their way through the draughty house. For even in such well-to-do "habitations" (as the grown-up Mercy decorously called her home), the entries were speaking-tubes for all the winds of heaven, and Arctic terrors beset the "long black passage up to bed." (Fortunate indeed was the child who could betake herself nightly to the trundle-bed in mother's room, close neighbored by the kitchen and some flickering warmth before the embers were covered, though the apartment itself were that horror of early American life, a dark bedroom.)

Undoubtedly she went through all the conventional miseries dealt out by an inscrutable Providence to the babies of that and an earlier time. She was probably put into fine linen slips, and her mottled arms were bare. For hardships which no grown man would feel called on to endure, save for conscience's sake, were then made the portion of the young of our New England race, — possibly in some innocent obedience to the law which brings about the survival of the strong. Luckily it was unnecessary for our little maid to endure the extreme rigor of the ceremony of baptism; for being born before the dead of winter, it was probable that the water was not ice-cold, thus to contribute to her undoing. But it is only fair to assume that she became a victim of other intolerable hardships. She was of a delicate organization, and if she fell ill, she must have been drenched with black draughts of simples, bled, and bolused back to health. She was not "innoculated," though that was one of the new lights of her childhood; in her case it was to come later. Certain things we do know about her; that she had her task and her seam, and that there was time in summer for sweet outdoor delights. She must have picked cranberries, not as a little Cape girl would do it nowadays, from cultivated marshes

and for a price, but the sharp wild fruit, owing nothing to the care of man, but born of the benison of sun and air, and relegated to a child's playhouse rather than kitchen use. She gathered bayberries for candles and healing salve, and came in odorous of their powdered sweetness, better than "Myrrhs, Aloes, & Caſsias smell," like a spice-laden ship from the farther East. In winter, too, she could shut her eyes as she sat by the dying candle, and see as in a vision conjured up through its breath, the pasture where that fragrance had birth, the darling knoll and hollow, and so raise up the image of her summer days.

Strange pabulum she may well have found in print! Even at so late a period of Colonial history the child of any household where books had entrance, knew things whereof even the learned of the present generation are happily ignorant. I have no doubt that little Mercy, omnivorous reader from the first, had shudderingly perused the Day of Doom, and could rehearse the fate of "Idolaters," "Blasphemers," "Swearers shrewd," the "Covetous & Ravenous," and

> "children flagiti-ous
> And Parents who did them undo
> by nurture vici-ous."

Perhaps she even skimmed Cotton's Spiritual Milk for Babes, and, from the Bay Psalm Book, could voice her lamentations : —

> "My heart is ſmote, & dryde like graſſe,
> that I to eate my bread forget :
> By reaſon of my groanings voyce
> my bones unto my ſkin are set.
> Like Pelican in wildernes,
> like Owle in deſart so am I :
> I watch, & like a ſparrow am
> on houſe top ſolitarily."

All through her childhood and youth runs the lovely suggestion of duality and comradeship ; for she was the chosen companion of her brother James. The intimate spiritual relation between them through their later years makes it possible to assume this double kinship of their early life. When, a man of middle age, the crowning calamity of mental derangement came upon him, it was Mercy's voice which had power to soothe him and lull him to self-control ; and in 1766, when his patriotic mission had just begun, he wrote her : "This you may depend on, no man ever loved a sister better, & among all my conflicts I never forget yt I am endeavoring to serve you and yours."

Such nearness was not only the kinship of blood ; it was an intimacy of soul. To me their early days on the Cape suggest another lad and lassie, — Maggie Tulliver and Tom. As

Maggie trotted about after Tom, adoring, worshipful, glad of a glance, so the little Cape girl followed and imitated her big brother. They were more or less alike in temperament, — ardent, mobile, brilliant, though the girl must have had a stronger balance-wheel to fit her for the ills of life. The intellectual air of the farmhouse must have been keen and wholesome. Think what events were to be talked over, and in what vivid guise! In those days when news travelled by hot word of mouth, and an overflowing though infrequent post, every hint from the outer world became strangely dramatic, and even the children must have gained such an idea of the wonder of life as is scarcely conceivable now. Think how fast the New England drama had swept on from the bleak curtain-raising on Plymouth shore! Reminiscence had only to stretch forth a finger into the immediate past to bring it back covered with honey or gall: but nothing neutral. There were strange doings in the Massachusetts to be talked over by night when the fire leaped high and the cider-mug hissed by the coals: Merry Mount and the unhallowed revellers who dared reinstate May Day in godly New England; John Endicott, the apostle of intolerance, doing his picturesque deed of cutting the red cross from

the banner of England, lest a savor of Popery contaminate the air, and Anne Hutchinson, brought up before the bar of public injustice.

The witchcraft delusion was not so far agone, and even a family of such breadth of thought and enlightenment must have been touched, in some fashion, by a vestige of that horror which, like a lifting mist, still lay along the land. Children knew strange lore, and talked it over in secret; or, not daring to speak, even to each other, hugged it to their own little breasts. They knew perfectly well how witches charm the butter and keep the cream from rising. They could guess the hidden cause when horses fell lame, and cows pined in pasture; they knew how maidens wasted while a waxen image burned. They recognized in a black cloud of the early evening some adventurous madam sailing over the town on her faithful broomstick. When they sat on their little stools close within the yawning fireplace, they traced weird figures in the embers, and they knew what used to happen in Salem town when naughty children swore themselves bewitched, and snatched away innocent lives. One little girl of a somewhat later period, in Duxbury, used to sit dreaming over the coals in the beloved company of the iron fire-dogs, in shape two Hessian soldiers; and

when no one was looking, she slyly wiped their little noses on her pinafore, to make them feel alive and cared for, and told them all the secrets intrusted to no one else. Mercy Otis, too, may have had such companions to share her heart-secrets, and wherever they are, possibly they waken at nighttime, like the puppets of German fairy-lore, and tell the tale we wait to hear. There were fresh legends of Indian life and present fear of Indian onslaught to be conjured up by the childish mind. The present might abide in tranquillity, but who that had heard of scalps and ambush would not tremble, and, like John Fiske, in his precocious boyhood, fail to be comforted by grown-up reassurance? For that youthful sage, living peaceably in his New England home, one luckless day read of the massacre at Schenectady, and thenceforward shivered at night over the logical prospect of its repetition. No one could comfort him; the assertion that all the hostile Indians were hundreds of miles away bore no fruit for his inflamed imagination. Did they assure him of his own safety? He shook his wise little head, in a conviction stronger than fact. "Ah," said he, mourning over the futility of ready-made platitudes, "*that's what they thought at Schenectady!*"

Mercy Otis learned, like all proper maidens, the arts that go to the making of good housewives; yet I cannot believe that they wholly appealed to her. She was one of the children whose vision is inevitably set toward "the vista of the Book." She was created for the intellectual life, and in that day, when the feminine intelligence could demand no special training, she must have taken refuge the more in the vicarious joy of her brother's possibilities. Not only through her childhood, but until her marriage, it is possible to read her mental phases chiefly through reference to him, — a soul so vivid that it might easily illuminate another more confined. This was an age when needlework and housewifery were all that could be expected of a woman; if she also sang a little, painted a little, and played tinkling tunes on the harpsichord, so much the more elegant was her status; and Mercy Otis was thus doubly fortunate in sharing, though at second-hand, in her brother's intellectual pursuits. He was a close student, and the Rev. Jonathan Russell, who prepared him for college, was Mercy's tutor also, and the director of her reading. He loaned her Raleigh's History of the World, and encouraged her in the study of history in general, for which she had a passion. Years after, in a satirical letter of advice to a young lady,

she begs her, with mock seriousness, to have nothing to do with any save frivolous and sceptical topics, since they are the only ones likely to pass current in the drawing-room; and adds, with a special stress gained from the devotion of a lifetime: —

"If you have a Taste for the Study of History let me Urge you not to Indulge it, least the Picture of human Nature in All Ages of the World should give Your Features too serious a Cast or by becoming acquainted with the rude State of Nature in the Earlier Ages, — the Origin of Society, the Foundations of Government & the Rise & Fall of Empires, you should Inadvertently glide into that unpardonable Absurdity & sometimes Venture to speak when Politicks happen to be the Subject. — In short, Science of any Kind beyond the Toilet, the Tea, or the Card Table, is as Unnecessary to a Lady's figuring in the Drawing Room as Virtue unsully'd by *Caprice* is to the Character of the finish'd Gentleman. — She may be the admiration of the *Ton* without the One & He the Idol of popular Fame without the Other."

There spoke the woman devoted not only to history but to "politicks," and whose later life but copied fair her past.

Unfortunately, very little material is extant relative to James Otis's youth; he, as the boy, might easily have had a Boswell where a girl

would have passed on in an unrecognized obscurity. Like his life, his history is incomplete, illuminated here and there by flashes of insight, but never harmonious and consecutive. We know him to have been brilliant, erratic, no less a genius in capacity than in temperament. A creature of mental impulse, he nevertheless carried the ballast of reverence for exact study. His mind was of the vivid touch-and-go quality, but he was wise enough to feed it on the solid, the permanently satisfying. "If you want to read poetry," he wrote from the experience of his later years, "read Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope, and throw all the rest in the fire; these are all that are worth reading."

He entered college in 1739 (a wrench for the little sister, then only eleven, left at home to pore over her Raleigh's History), and though for two years he seems to have been rather beguiled by the amusements of college life, he afterwards settled down to such serious application that even during his vacations at home, he so bound himself to his books that the neighbors seldom saw him out of doors. Mercy was entirely his equal, so far as the ardor of intellectual life was concerned; and here again, as in her first childhood, one can fancy that her attitude toward his studies was that of dear Maggie Tulliver in her ambition to conquer

Euclid, which was not above Tom's capacity and therefore quite within her own. Do we not all remember that heartsick moment when Maggie, in young ambition, asserted her mental equality, and Tom appealed to the tutor, to know whether girls also were intended for the higher culture?

"They've a great deal of superficial cleverness," said Mr. Snelling, "but they could n't go far into anything." Conventional dictum, made to fit Maggie Tulliver and Mercy Otis as well! And one was as likely to be satisfied with it as the other.

James Otis proved an excellent model. He was a classical scholar, and he saw the necessity of forming written English upon those types of perennial beauty belonging to the greater past; he had, too, a singularly clear appreciation of the value of a general culture in his own chosen profession of the law. In his maturer life, he writes his father in regard to the younger son, Samuel Allyne, who was about to study law, that extraneous culture is not a question of outward ornament, but an absolute necessity to a man who would shine in his profession. "I am sure," he says, "the year and a half I spent in the same way, after leaving the academy, was as well spent as any part of my life; and I shall always lament that

I did not take a year or two further for more general inquiries in the arts and sciences before I sat down to the laborious study of the laws of my country." Culture is indeed not so much acquisition as an attitude of mind, and he had it in its broadest significance.

The life of the Barnstable farmhouse at the West Marshes was prosperous and abundant, in the manner of the time. The father, James Otis, was a man of public influence and distinguished character, who owed his standing to a mind of native ability rather than to any exceptional training. How greatly the intellectual atmosphere of the household was brightened by the home-comings of the brilliant eldest son, and the sharing of his fresh experiences, one can easily guess. His course at Harvard was at a period marked by great public excitement, both in the polity and the religious feeling of the college. It was during this time that Whitefield had stirred up Cambridge to a fervent heat by an arraignment of the college for its neglect of religious observances. It shared his ban with other universities; their "light had become darkness." Some of the students, during his visit, were "wonderfully wrought upon;" but the chief effect of his diatribe was to raise in New England a wave of theological controversy which culminated when

Dr. Wigglesworth, then Hollis Professor of Divinity, published a full and elaborate refutation of his charges, and sufficiently vindicated the college from a suspicion of irreligion. All this turmoil of other-worldly logic and iron-bound speculation must have reached the Barnstable farmhouse not only through the ordinary channels, but hot from the mouth of so impetuous a witness. Mercy Otis was sharing her brother's education; she was learning to think.

She seldom went from home, but one of the rare occasions was to attend his Commencement at the college. This, in old New England days, was a fête indeed: a fête so important as to be attended by giant expenditure and sinful extravagance. Indeed, so early as 1722 in its history, an act was passed "that thenceforth no preparation nor provision of either Plumb Cake, or Roasted, Boyled, or Baked Meates or Pyes of any kind shal be made by any Commencer," and that no "such have any distilled Lyquours in his Chamber or any composition therewith," under penalty of twenty shillings or forfeiture of the said provisions. Five years later, several other acts were passed "for preventing the Excesses, Immoralities, and Disorders of the Commencements" by way of enforcing the foregoing act. These, with a simplicity of conclusion which brings a smile,

declare that "if any who now doe or hereafter shall stand for their degrees, presume to doe anything contrary to the said Act or goe about to evade it by Plain Cake," they shall forfeit the honors of the college.

But Commencement was still a great day. Even before Otis's time, the Governor and his bodyguard rode out to Cambridge in state, arriving there at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. A procession was formed of the Corporation, Overseers, magistrates, ministers, and other distinguished guests, and marched in stately file from Harvard Hall to the old Congregational Church. There were orations, and disputations in logic, ethics, and natural philosophy, and later, the conferring of degrees; after which, the mighty men of learning and state went back to Harvard Hall for dinner. But the ceremonies were not concluded; for after dinner they returned to the church for more disputations and conferring of the Masters' degrees. Then the students escorted the Governor, Corporation, and Overseers, still in procession, to the President's house, and the day was over.

I cannot help thinking that when Mercy Otis, a proper maiden, clad in New England decorum, adorned with the graces of her day, went up to see these learned gymnastics,

she was conscious of a homesick yearning for the same intellectual game, only to be partaken of vicariously. From the very first, she longed to know, to do; and I fancy there was in her heart a properly disguised ache over the fact that, for the intellectual woman, the world had apparently no definite place.

After this, her line of life lay only briefly with that of her brother. He left home a little later, in 1745, to study law in the Boston office of Jeremiah Gridley; and after two years' practice at Plymouth, he took up his residence in Boston. But with those Plymouth years she had a pleasant connection, and there lives to this day a witness to testify of it. Tradition says that Mercy Otis used to visit her brother there, and it says also that a certain piece of her handiwork, the embroidered top of a card-table (now the property of her great-granddaughter at Plymouth), was done about that time. And I like to think she drew the faithful stitches to the accompaniment of maiden dreams, as she sat by the window in the quaint little town and looked up, quite without intention, to receive a greeting from that very personable young man, James Warren, riding in from the farm.

In 1755, James Otis married, and thenceforth he and the "little sister" were separated

as regards the life of personal association, though they were never divided in feeling. For her, the Barnstable days went tranquilly on until, at the age of twenty-six, she married James Warren, this same young merchant of Plymouth.

III

LIFE AT PLYMOUTH

In every period of intense moral or intellectual life, there are scores of men of whom not even the scholar takes cognizance. The moment of England's great dramatic blossoming is, to the million, Shakespeare's day and that only. They agree to recognize him alone, as if he had sprung, in isolated magnificence, from a soil nourishing no undergrowth; they leave untouched by a glance the stems that flourished about him only to be obscured. So must it be in all strenuous times of whatever complexion. The one is selected for universal worship; the unrecognized many sleep. Our pre-Revolutionary period bred intellect and spirit, not yet knowing what should be its use. Some of it came to name and fame; other, as worthy, has to be sought in musty archives. But let it be remembered that, as the great are but the embodied spirit of their age, so the great who do not absolutely "arrive" (according to that many-headed monster, the crowd) are exponents of that spirit also.

James Warren of Plymouth was one of the men who, in actual power of influence among the first of his day, is yet not always remembered with them. He was not conspicuous: not a "master of the puppets," as Hutchinson called Samuel Adams, that wily mover of the pieces in the game; not a man of worldly mark like Hancock, thus deputed to do the double duty of a patriot and a figurehead. He had not the brilliancy of Otis, nor the shining qualities of certain others among the van, but throughout the Revolution he was one of those quiet, steady, irresistible forces which bring the end. He was of good stock. The first American Warren of this branch was Richard, who came over in the Mayflower and settled in Plymouth. From him was descended, in the fifth generation, James Warren, who was born in the farmhouse at Plymouth, November, 1726. In 1745, he was a graduate of Harvard College. There he probably had the acquaintance of James Otis, who was graduated only two years earlier, and possibly Otis not only made the Plymouth household a stopping-place, on his way home to Barnstable, but often young Warren went riding down to the farmhouse with him, to meet the stately damsel who afterwards became his wife. After that marriage (which took place in November, 1754), for a

long period, before its own outspoken *Sturm und Drang*, Mercy's life must be known through the medium of his. The records of her entire youth have been so completely lost, that I could only think, as I sought them vainly, of The Minister's Great Opportunity, that slyly humorous tale of the funeral sermon made up, in despair of other data, from the public events which had taken place during the course of a colorless but very long life. Yet it is more or less legitimate to regard the Mercy Warren who has so effectually hidden her youth, through the medium of circumstances; not because she lived so feebly, but because she lived so well. For that very reason it is possible to assume that she felt thus and so, since this or that wind of destiny was blowing upon the public. She was a creature so alive to great issues which to the commonplace mind are not great until they have passed into history, that it is possible to guess how they affected her even before the days when we know, in slight measure, how she affected them. There was never a lack of stimulus from without to excite all the capacity for thought and expression which, in so rich a nature, could not long lie dormant. Before her prime, came our turmoil with the French, and in 1759, the surrender of Quebec and the death

of Wolfe; and she had not been a year married and settled at Plymouth when the Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia ("the hardest [case] since our Saviour was upon earth," and just as poignant for not having yet been celebrated in verse), and some of the poor exiles later drifted down to Plymouth, picturesque remnants of a shattered community. In the spasmodic growth of a new nation, there was such matter for thought as to supersede the necessity for technical education.

Mercy Warren's own life had been late in developing. To be married at twenty-six was virtually to be an "old maid," just passing on into that limbo of patient acquiescence in the joy of others. There had not yet been exactly the right combination of events to display her powers to the world. Of course she was an irreproachable housewife, and doubtless she was already submitting to her proud husband the poetical effusions over which she seems always to have had a very genuine shyness. Family life went quietly then in the old farmhouse at the head of the beach. This was known as "Clifford," named, as one or another has said, though by what authority I know not, by Mrs. Warren herself. It was the old Richard Warren estate, and was inherited by James Warren on the death of his father, in

1757. That farmhouse, as it stands to-day, is not so different from its older estate, and from it you may reconstruct a morsel of the past. A street-car route leads thither now, some three miles out from Plymouth (though not by the old road; that lies further inland), and all along the way are manifold beauties not unlike the scenery of Cape Cod. There are the same knolls and dimpling hollows; oak woods fill the distance, and beside the modern track lie lowlands rich in flag and purple iris, and bosky thickets of bayberry and wild rose. The Clifford farmhouse is within the turn of a road, — a small, gambrel-roofed dwelling, not so much changed save that the tiny window-panes have been removed to make way for modern glass in more commodious squares. It is a modest house with but one room on either side of the front door; but it looks out on a prospect full of beauty. An aged linden is its neighbor, populous with bees, and gray-green willows line the way beyond. From the rough, lichened doorstone you may look down into bright green marshes where the Eel River winds and glimmers, or on and up into the distance where the tree-clad hills are fair. There were pleasant walks on that estate, then acre upon opulent acre. You might wander down to the curving beach, and look over to

Clark's Island and Saquish, or Manomet Point away to your right; or you might thread the woods, by some green bridle-path, and approach the Point itself. There Mercy Warren began her married life, and there, in tranquil visits, after she had moved into Plymouth town, she did a great amount of literary work.

At his father's death, James Warren stepped into his place as high-sheriff, appointed by his Majesty's Governor; and so truly was he a man of weight and integrity, and so well did he fit the office, that he retained it to the breaking out of the Revolution, notwithstanding his instant and undaunted stand against Great Britain. I am persuaded that a very pretty farmer was wasted when James Warren was forced to spend his life in serving his country. He loved growing things, and chronicled the state of the crops and the weather with an unfailing interest and delight. He had studied agriculture as a science, too, according to the light of those days; and I fancy he would have been well content, had nothing more urgent demanded his attention, to settle down to the absorbing occupation of planting a seed and watching it grow. But he became a merchant of Plymouth, and dealt in shipping ventures, foreign and domestic. Meanwhile, he had removed into Plymouth town, to the house on

the corner of North and Main Streets, once occupied by Colonel Winslow, commander of the forces sent to expel the unhappy Acadians. The house "is living yet," and trade has crept into it, though not with the effect of any vital change. It is a commodious dwelling, very picturesque under its gambrel roof; and there are still those who remember it unaltered within, its ancient staircase and broad window-seats. To-day it is the near neighbor of other dwellings, but then it must have had the company of grass and trees. This was to be Mercy Warren's real home, where she lived a life broken chiefly by flittings to Clifford and visits to her husband when he was in Watertown and Cambridge.

James Warren marched steadily into prominence of act and position. For Mercy Warren, too, the great events of domestic life were treading evenly with those of the outer world. On October 18, 1757, her son James was born, and March 24, 1759, her darling Winslow, the child of her heart. His name came into the family with Penelope Winslow, who married James Warren's father, and he is especially to be noted throughout his mother's life; for tender as she was in all domestic relations, for this one son her affection seems to have been a yearning passion.

On April 14, 1762, was born her son Charles, only a little after the fire had sprung up in the Colonies and begun to crackle and run, fanned diligently by James Otis. For events were happening at this time which proved to be of extraordinary import to the Otis family, and in which Mrs. Warren must, not only for that reason, but from their public bearing, have taken the keenest interest. Now at the moment when amity between England and America should have been strengthened by their common cause against the French, and the virtual termination of that great strain, came the issuing of Writs of Assistance whereby a man's house ceased to be his castle. These men of the Colonies were of English blood; what one of them would tamely tolerate an instrument to be granted by the courts empowering the officers of the customs to enter a man's house at will, and search it for concealed goods?

Previously, there had been run into the web of events a little thread of personal history of which the royalists were fain to make much. In 1760, Chief-Justice Sewall died, and Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, who had already been given an overflowing quota of public offices, was appointed his successor. To heap a further trust upon him was manifestly unjust to other waiting merit. Moreover, this event belongs, at

least by implication, to the Otis family ; for it was believed that Governor Shirley had, in his day, virtually promised the place, when it should be vacant, to James Otis's father, and that when this understanding was repudiated, a sudden opposition to the royal government sprang up in the son, and he vowed, in revengeful indignation, to "set the Province in flames, if he perished by the fire." To subscribe to so basely personal a motive was wantonly to tarnish a patriot's fair fame. It is inevitable that Otis, with other thinking men of the Massachusetts, must have looked with alarm upon Hutchinson's accumulation of office, implying as it did the recompense of an unquestioning loyalty ; and there must also have been a natural though unjust resentment, with the suspicion that Hutchinson had craftily used his personal influence to steal away the place. Who shall say that James Otis's subsequent resistance to tyranny was not the outcome of patriotism, and patriotism alone ? Only those who would tear up lilies and plant nettles in their place. But in that first seed of distrust sown by Hutchinson lay perhaps the germ of the scorn which Mercy Warren (in common with every other patriot) felt for him to the end.

Following dramatically on the heels of this personal affront came the battle over the Writs

of Assistance, wherein customs and Colonists strove mightily. Otis, as Advocate-General, was called on, by virtue of his office, to argue the cause of the former. He refused, and resigned his place; then, despising fees in such a cause, he espoused with Thacher the side of the merchants of Boston. Jeremiah Gridley, his old master in the law, spoke for the rights of the crown; and though Otis treated him with a winning and filial deference, he smote his arguments valiantly, and came out victorious. The scene was lighted by the dignified splendor of the time. The trial took place in the Council Chamber of the Old Town House, where, looking down on rebels and horrified loyalists, were the full-length portraits of Charles II. and James II. A concourse of deeply anxious citizens filled the hall, and among the five judges who presided was Hutchinson, afterwards to be unmercifully satirized by Mercy Warren, to the everlasting delight of the patriots whose hatred he won. That Council Chamber of the Old Town House had already become a theatre of dramatic action, and to review the events of the Revolution is to find it hung, like a rich arras, with the life history of stirring times.

"The Council Chamber was as respectable an apartment as the House of Commons or the House

of Lords in Great Britain, in proportion; or that in the State House in Philadelphia, in which the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. In this chamber, round a great fire, were seated five judges with Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson at their head as Chief-Justice, all arrayed in their new, fresh, rich robes of scarlet English broadcloth; in their large cambric bands and immense judicial wigs. In this chamber were seated at a long table all the barristers-at-law of Boston and of the neighboring county of Middlesex, in gowns, bands, and tie wigs. They were not seated on ivory chairs, but their dress was more solemn and more pompous than that of the Roman Senate, when the Gauls broke in upon them. Two portraits, at more than full length, of King Charles the Second and of King James the Second, in splendid gold frames, were hung up on the most conspicuous side of the apartment. If my young eyes or old memory have not deceived me, these were as fine pictures as I ever saw; the colors of the royal ermine and long, flowing robes were the most glowing, the figures the most noble and graceful, the features the most distinct and characteristic, far superior to those of the king and queen of France in the Senate Chamber of Congress, — these were worthy of the pencils of Rubens and Van Dyke. There was no painter in England capable of them at that time. They had been sent over without frames in Governor Pownall's time, but he was no admirer of Charles or James. The

pictures were stowed away in a garret, among rubbish, until Governor Bernard came, who had them cleaned, superbly framed, and placed in council for the admiration and imitation of all men, no doubt with the advice and concurrence of Hutchinson and all his nebula of stars and satellites. One circumstance more. Samuel Quincy and John Adams had been admitted barristers at that term. John was the youngest; he should be painted looking like a short, thick archbishop of Canterbury, seated at the table with a pen in his hand, lost in admiration."

So, remembering the days of his youth, did John Adams write, in his old age, to William Tudor.

It is only necessary here to speak of Otis's share in the argument; for that was the illuminated initial point of the Revolution. In the words of John Adams: —

"Otis was a flame of fire; with a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried all before him. American Independence was then and there born."

What a story to bear back to the fireside at Plymouth, and how Mercy Warren must have

chanted in her heart those splendid prophetic words on which was laid the foundation of the Revolution: "No taxation without representation!" James Otis had revived them, and made them walk in living power. Thenceforward the drama ran very swiftly, and became, for Mercy Warren, a source of intimate personal history: for in every act her husband bore a part. His name is constantly found appended to the local documents, as one of almost every committee of public safety. At the time of the Stamp Act, he was chosen a member of the General Court from Plymouth; and when, after the repeal of that act, there came a revulsion of feeling wherein no patriot could be blamed for retiring to lament a lost cause, he was one of those who, with Samuel Adams, never paused to doubt, but clung to the word *resistance*, and led the people on. At the death of Joseph Warren, he was made President of the Provincial Congress, and while the American Army was at Cambridge, he was Paymaster-General. But though, merely by course of events, this is anticipating, it is perhaps not illegitimate, for with James Warren, what he was officially seemed to be of far less importance than what he did in the way of direct, personal influence. He was ever on the side of revolt, and even in a simple, more or less

social circumstance, his attitude was consistent. In 1769, the Old Colony Club was formed to celebrate the anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing, and when it dissolved, having split on the rock of political discussion, James Warren, who had joined soon after its organization, was among the disaffected who believed in war, and who could not suppress his "Everlasting Yea."

About this time came a calamity which not only involved the Colonies in loss, but especially touched the name of Otis. In 1769, James Otis retired from active political life, through one of the incidents so consistent with his dramatic career. He had grown every day more erratic, more unguarded in his utterances; and finally his indignation against the four royal Commissioners of Customs burst unguardedly forth. He was too dangerous a man not to have excited their animosity; and they, with Governor Bernard, had not only insinuated treasonable charges against him in public reports, but they had in secret letters gone to an outer limit of accusation. Copies of these letters were procured and furnished him, and their reading filled him with an ungovernable and righteous indignation. Conscious of his own public rectitude, and aware of being estranged from Great Britain only so far as a higher patriotism demanded, he was stung to the soul by

the implication of treason. His very slight endowment of prudence fled away on the wind, and he published in the "Boston Gazette" a letter as offensive as it was furious, mentioning his four traducers by name. Next evening, John Robinson, one of the Commissioners, was at the British Coffee-House on State Street, with a number of officers and public men, when Otis came in. Hot words were followed by blows, the lights were extinguished, and Otis, assailed by a band of Robinson's adherents, was seriously wounded in the head.

This attack completed the mental alienation which had already begun, and his brilliant faculties fell into speedy and irreparable decay. His public career was closed. He retired into the country, and withdrew almost entirely from the practice of his profession; and although, in 1771, he served as Representative, he had in reality nothing more to bestow upon his country. There were traces of the old vigor and momentary flashes of wit when he was among his intimate friends; but James Otis the patriot was dead to the world. It was a costly tribute which the Otis family had paid to the turmoil of the times. A fragmentary letter written to him by Mrs. Warren, relative to the assault, is of interest only in the general tenor of dignity and restraint dominating her horror at the outrage.

She is penetrated to the soul by what he has suffered, but she begs him not to avenge himself, nor to be drawn into that last resort of honor, the duel. Non-resistance was never her standard; but she would have you resist as if the eyes of the world and a Greater than the world were upon you.

Before this time of grief and loss, two more sons had been born to her, — Henry, on the twenty-first of March, 1764; and George, on the twentieth of September, 1766. Her family of five was now complete.

There was good talk in the Plymouth household. Possibilities were discussed there which afterwards grew into reality. No wonder Mrs. Warren wrote, in one of the periods of her husband's absence, when the men of the growing nation were called together for serious deliberation: "I am very well only Wish for the Company of my Husband & a Little Company of the Right Stamp sociable Learned Virtuous & polite." To such society she was well used. She hints at the debates which had preceded the great discussions afterwards to take place under the eye of the people, when, on July 14, 1774, she writes John Adams: —

"Though Mr. Adams has Condescended to ask my sentiments in Conjunction with those of a person qualified (by his integrity & attachment to the

interest of his Country) to advise if it were needful at this important Crisis, I shall not be so presumptuous as to offer anything but my fervent Wishes that the Enemies of America may Hereafter forever tremble at the Wisdom the firmness the prudence & the justice of the Delegates Deputed from our Cities, as much as ever the phocians or any other petty State did at the power of the Amphyctiones.

"but if you sir still flatter me so far as to express another Wish to know further my oppinion, I would advise that a preparatory Conference should be held at the North west Corner of Liberty Sq Plimouth on any day you shall Name preceding the 12 of August. but whether you agree to this project or not I hope to see my friend Mrs. Adams here in a short time."

From the very first, she was rich in "troops of friends," and it is necessary to remember that, in order to see how vigorous her intellectual life must have been, how wide-reaching in influence, both in what it gave and in what it took. To consider the dearth of special education for women, and the isolation of the times, is to deplore for our great-grandmothers the absence of modern advantages; but in Mercy Warren's case it is only necessary to remember that she had the constant stimulus of a wonderful mental companionship. The facilities of travel were agonizingly slow, and she complains more

than once, in the absence of her husband, of the intellectual leanness of Plymouth; but bulky letters were always on their way to her, full of a golden interchange of thought. Her intimacy with Abigail Adams was of very early date. Indeed, her public sympathies, and all the larger interests of her life, might almost be traced through reference to the family at Braintree alone; for she and her husband, and John Adams and his wife, made a notable *partie carrée* of plainspoken and affectionate alliance.

John Adams's letters to General Warren are invaluable as to the insight they afford in regard to the true character of both. Especially do they show how constantly Warren's advice was sought on all the topics suggested by the great questions of the day. Not only were they in official *rapport*, — Adams as delegate to the General Congress and Warren as President of the Provincial Congress, — but Adams is always pouring in upon his friend a fiery flood of interrogation, — for advice, for definite information in regard to events and the state of mind in Massachusetts, — one impetuous query almost tumbling over another in its haste to be there. In 1775, letters follow one another thick and fast. "What think you of an American Fleet?" he asks. Would it protect the trade of New England? Would the Southern Colonies feel a laxity about

undertaking it, since their own trade was being carried on in British bottoms? He wants to know what has become of the whalemen, codfishers, and other seamen belonging to our Province, and "what number of them you imagine might be enlisted into the service of the Continent."

What ships, brigantines, or schooners could be hired? What places are most suitable for building vessels? What shipwrights are to be had, what men for commanders and officers? October 19, 1775, he writes: —

D^R^ SIR, — I want to be with you Tete a Tete to canvass, and discuss the complicated subject of Trade . . . Shall we hush the Trade of the whole Continent and not permit a Vessell to go out of our Harbours except from one Colony to another? — How long will or can our People bear this? I say they can bear it forever — if Parliament should build a Wall of Brass, at low Water Mark, We might live and be happy. We must change our Habits, our prejudices our Palates, our Taste in Dress, Furniture, Equipage Architecture &c — But we can live and be happy — But the Question is whether our people have Virtue enough to be mere husbandmen, Mechanicks & Soldiers?

Oct 20, 1775.

DEAR SIR, — Can the Inhabitants of North America *live* without foreign trade? There is Beef & Pork and Poultry, and Mutton and Venison and

Veal, Milk, Butter, Cheese, Corn, Barley Rye, Wheat, in short every Species of Eatables animal and Vegetable in a vast abundance, an immense profusion. We raise about Eleven hundred thousand Bushells of Corn, yearly more than We can possibly consume.

The Country produces Provisions of all Kinds, enough for the sustenance of the Inhabitants, and an immense surplusage . . . But cloathing. — If instead of raising Million Bushells of Wheat for Exportation, and Rice, Tobacco, naval stores Indigo, Flaxseed, Horses Cattle, &c. Fish, Oyl, Bone, Potash &c, &c, &c, the Hands now employed in raising surplusages of these articles for Exportation, were employed in raising Flax and Wool, and manufacturing them into Cloathing, we should be cloathed comfortably.

We must at first indeed Sacrifice some of our Appetites. Coffee, Wine, Punch, sugar, Molasses, &c and our Dress would not be so elegant — Silks and velvets & Lace must be dispensed with — But these are Trifles in a Contest for Liberty.

October 21, 1775, he writes again : —

Dear Sir, — We must bend our Attention to Saltpetre, — We must make it. While Britain is Mistress of the Sea and has so much Influence with foreign Courts, We cannot depend upon a supply from abroad.

He goes on with an enthusiastic disquisition on the making of gunpowder. The process is

very simple; it has been made, it must be made again. And he concludes: —

"I am determined never to have Salt Petre out of my Mind but to insert some stroke or other about it in every Letter for the future. it must be had."

February 3, 1777, comes an appeal which is almost pathetic in its solemnity: —

"I will be instant & incessant in Season and out of Season in inculcating these important Truths, that nothing can Save us but Government in the State and Discipline in the Army. There are so many Persons among my worthy Constituents who love Liberty better than they understand it that I expect to become unpopular by my Preaching. But Woe is me if I preach it not. Woe will be to them if they do not hear."

It is difficult to forsake these trenchant, impetuous letters of John Adams, himself one of the most wholly lovable characters of the time, with his peppery temper, his irrepressible sense of humor, his moral earnestness and personal vanity. Never was a truer soul, more devoted to his country's weal; never, perhaps, when beside himself with the knowledge of wrong, either personal or general, a man more difficult to manage.

"I write every Thing to you who know how to take me," he says to James Warren, in a letter of October 25, 1775. "You don't expect Correctness nor Ceremony from me — When I have any Thing to write and one Moment to write it in I scratch it off to you — who don't expect that I should dissect these Things, or reduce them to Correct Writing. You must know I have not Time for that."

On the twentieth of May, 1776, he sets down one sentence which stirs the mind like a noble thought dressed in a splendor like its own: "Every Post and every Day rolls in upon us Independence like a Torrent."

All through the letters runs the swift speculation on saltpetre. He dreams saltpetre; he eats and drinks it. And all these unbosomings came to James Warren, the plain man of no rhetoric, who marched straight forward, and "never doubted clouds would break." Warren was not only a strong force, but a steady influence, whose power was not to be computed. He was one of those men who dominate change; and what his wife said of him, in a family letter, shows the simple tenacity of his purpose, as well as his affection: —

"His attachments are strong, and when he likes or dislikes either men or measures, the shaking of a leaf will not alter his opinion."

Again, a quiet utterance of his own pictures him in all his mental directness and simplicity. So late as July, 1788, he writes John Adams that he regrets not having been able to meet and welcome him on the very first day of his landing in America, and adds: —

> I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you, & shewing you that I am in Sentiment, in principle Character & Conduct the very same man you was so perfectly acquainted with in your old friend
>
> & Humble Servt
>
> J. Warren.

The tastes and pursuits of the two men were delightfully in unison. Both had at all times a true and touching longing for domestic joys; John Adams was not alone in wishing he might dine "upon rusticoat potatoes" at home, in preference to the gayest banquet under heaven. Both were devoted to the farm; and when they could return to assume the management of affairs just where this had been left to the careful housewives, great was their joy.

It is hardly possible to take Mrs. Warren's life consecutively, like those careers which develop from year to year in response to personal stress; rather must it be read in reference to public periods and emotions. Possibly there is something misleading in throwing the friends of her

youth and her later life together in a vocal symposium; but only by viewing it as a whole can we understand what a goodly company this was. There were not only the Adamses, but Mrs. Adams's sister, Mrs. Shaw; Hannah Winthrop, the wife of Dr. Winthrop of Harvard (Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy), with whom she corresponded as Philomela to Mrs. Winthrop's Honoria. At one time she made Mrs. Winthrop (who then figured as Narcissa) known to Mrs. Adams (Portia), to their mutual delight. She became acquainted with Mrs. Montgomery (whose husband was killed, in 1775, in the attack on Quebec) through addressing a letter of condolence to the heart-broken widow. The friendship grew and continued to their increasing satisfaction. (I cannot but feel that Mrs. Warren's admiring attention was drawn to the husband and wife through that rather theatrical exclamation of his on setting forth, "You shall never blush for your Montgomery!" Like all imaginative persons, Mercy Warren loved "a piece of purple.") Then there were Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Hancock, — a group of noble dames. Some of these ladies had a very pretty taste for sentiment, which was not totally abolished by the great themes on which they wrote. Their fictitious names are

only less high-flown than those which fluttered about the "Matchless Orinda;" over-sea there had flourished such pseudonyms as Rosania, the "adored Valeria," the "dazzling Polycrite," and "noble Palaemon," and we were only a step behind with our Portias, Dianas, and Aurelias. No wonder, when majestic events were stalking through the land, that there was some cosey joy in embroidering an occasional mood with fancy.

The men of the time were Mrs. Warren's intellectual comrades; she received letters from Samuel Adams, Jefferson, Dickinson, Gerry, Knox, and had occasionally a formal letter from Washington, which, with others from his wife, indicated the friendly footing between the two families. But one vivid intellectual stimulus came to her from abroad, — more powerful, perhaps, from the precise circumstances of the case than from the ability of the person who exerted it. This was the lady to whom she refers, with careful reverence, as "the celebrated Mrs. Macaulay."

At a cursory glance, Mrs. Macaulay seems to have held in Great Britain somewhat the same position which Mrs. Warren occupied in America; moreover, their opinions and intellectual tastes were strikingly similar. Mrs. Macaulay was an enthusiast in the study of history, and

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her conclusions were of the most radical dye. Liberty was her chosen mistress, her theme and her aspiration; and her pronounced views in favor of democracy must have endeared her to Mrs. Warren in the same measure in which they rendered her distasteful to the Tory contingency of her own country. Indeed, the two kept pace in work of about the same amount of earnestness and intrinsic value, save that Mrs. Macaulay's historical output came first. She was several years younger than Mrs. Warren, and it was when she was a little over thirty that the first volume of her History of England from the Accession of James I. was sent forth, to be immediately rent and torn by Tory critics, who spared neither it nor its author. But the completion of the work, a few years later, gave Mrs. Macaulay a more than respectable standing among impartial students; and she reaped abundant laurels in the social and intellectual world, was fêted in Paris, and crowned by the approbation of Madame Roland. She went back to England so infected with French fashions that the world in general (especially the Tories!) lost all patience with her.

"Painted up to the eyes," said John Wilkes, with a too realistic pun, "and looking as rotten as an old Catherine pear."

Then again she fell into indiscretion: when

she was between forty and fifty, she challenged the world's judgment by marrying a youth who had not half her years. The *passée* Catherine became Catherine Graham, and seemed well content with the change, though she thereby estranged an influential friend and patron, Dr. Wilson, rector of St. Stephen Walbrook, who had given her a house and furniture, and who, though he was too generous to recover his gift, never forgave her for declining into the green sickness of so incongruous a union. The lady was evidently eccentric, and careless of public opinion, though even so decorous a matron as Mrs. Warren does not impeach her morals. Indeed, the American dame is shown at her best in the large-minded fairness with which she sets aside current gossip, and takes instead the witness of the spirit.

"The celebrated Mrs. Macaulay Graham is with us," she writes her son, in 1784. "She is a lady whose Resources of knowledge seem to be almost inexhaustable . . . When I contemplate the superiority of her Genius I Blush for the imperfections of Human Nature & when I consider her as my friend I draw a Veil over the foibles of the Woman. And while her distinguished tallents exhibit the sex at least on a footing of equality their delicacy is hurt by her improper connexion. Her Right of

private judgment & independency of spirit may Vindicate the step but I fear the World will not readily forgive. Yet Mr. G. appears to be a man of understanding & virtue."

Mrs. Graham's own social world was not equally generous to her, so far as her radical views were concerned; and one need go no further than Dr. Johnson for an antipathy, if not to her, at least to her theories. More than once he gave her a down-setting; for they met only to differ, he to quiz her and she to retort, until jocose friends proposed that they should marry and make the feud perennial. Here is the old story of one encounter: —

"Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great Republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman. I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, sir, showed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since."

Mrs. Macaulay and Mrs. Warren corresponded

in a fashion suggesting the severest intellectual decorum. Nothing short of a dynasty or political "earthquake and eclipse" seemed worthy the sweep of their ambitious pens. Mrs. Warren, albeit she writes to a British subject, arraigns the government of Great Britain without a qualm; and Mrs. Macaulay acquiesces in the justice of her stand. She, in return, tosses about the monarchies of Europe like shuttlecocks, predicting and pondering over the fate of each. Possibly she, at least, would have liked to mention *chiffons* for a change, for her Paris life had taught her the value of extraneous charms; but, having taken the stand of feminine superiority, she held herself strictly to the issue at stake. Is it too trivial a mental attitude to suggest that she might have done better? When the Immortal Gods have need of historians, they will create them; but even they do not often give us a female Pepys, a chronicler of gossip and custom.

In 1784, Mrs. Macaulay visited America with her husband, and was a guest of the Warrens, as well as at Mount Vernon. Comments in regard to her, questions and eager answers, fly about in the letters of the day, and it is evident that her visit created no small breeze. But like so many figures which

flourish by reason of strong personal force, or mediocrity in their immediate contemporaries, her star has declined, until she must be zealously sought for even in the company she once adorned. The judgment of time has relegated her to an inconspicuous niche very far outside the temple of fame which she once bade fair to enter; and "the celebrated Mrs. Macaulay" of Mrs. Warren's day is emphatically "no more."

It is good to think what must have been said at firesides and in informal meetings of patriots when every man "put his whole soul," not in a jest, but in a worshipful panegyric on Liberty, or a picture of her radiant guise. Men were always getting together to exchange information or impressions. Daily life became an incessant carrying of news, good or bad, but always, from its bearing, great. Committees of Correspondence were formed throughout the Colonies to transmit intelligence by letter; and before Samuel Adams had formulated the scheme and brought it into definite operation, it was much discussed, especially in the house of James Warren, of Plymouth, where, according to Mercy Warren, it originated. This was her version of a debated point: —

"At an early period of the contest, when the public mind was agitated by unexpected events,

and remarkably pervaded with perplexity and anxiety, James Warren, Esq., of Plymouth, first proposed this institution to a private friend on a visit at his own house. Mr. Warren had been an active and influential member of the General Assembly from the beginning of the troubles in America, which commenced soon after the demise of George the Second. The principles and firmness of this gentleman were well known, and the uprightness of his character had sufficient weight to recommend the measure. As soon as the proposal was communicated to a number of gentlemen in Boston, it was adopted with zeal, and spread with the rapidity of enthusiasm, from town to town, and from province to province. Thus an intercourse was established, by which a similarity of opinion, a connexion of interest, and a union of action appeared, that set opposition at defiance, and defeated the machination of their enemies through all the colonies."

When, at the beginning of the year 1773, the scheme came into actual being, it was no nursling; it had virtually existed before, at moments of public exigency, and so far as individuals were concerned, it had already lived long. For talk was everywhere rioting, the talk which is the precursor of deeds, and private letters had been disseminating it. Patriotism was flaming from the pulpit; it was the fire on the altar. There was Dr.

Mayhew, who, in his sermon on the Repeal of the Stamp Act, in 1766, said the things which were afterwards done in blood. No utterance could have been more trenchant, less to be mistaken. It was like one crying for liberty from the housetops. He dared allude to the blackness of the day when the Stamp Act was to enter into being, and his exultation at finding the cloud had passed, and his peroration to Liberty, "celestial maid," were never to be forgotten. There was Dr. Chauncy, calmer of temper but no less unyielding, who asserted in cold blood that the cause was so righteous that, in the event of failure, eternal justice would send a host of angels to its rescue; and Dr. Samuel Cooper, whose pen was ready like his speech in freedom's name. He was a man of such culture that the French officers allied to us took delight in his society, and no doubt aided him in that very questionable accomplishment of his (according to Colonial estimate), a knowledge of the dangerous and pernicious French language.

But to offset these good men of a godly cause was that altogether delightful old wit and Tory, Dr. Mather Byles. His sympathies were frankly loyal, and he kept on praying for the King and "consorting" with British officers until his congregation very logically

concluded that he was no longer fitted to pray publicly for them; and in 1776, his connection with them was dissolved. But all through the years of his pastorate, good stories about him were always flying over the Province, to be repeated at every table. His puns are as intrinsic a part of New England history as those of Lamb and Sydney Smith in the literature of England. Tudor's stories about him are perennially good. Doubtless his people would have made him, like his colleagues, commit himself in the pulpit on the subject of politics, that they might have him on the hip; but he was not to be beguiled.

"I have," said he, "thrown up four breastworks, behind which I have entrenched myself, neither of which can be forced. In the first place, I do not understand politics; in the second place, you all do, every man and mother's son of you; in the third place, you have politics all the week (pray let one day in seven be devoted to religion); in the fourth place, I am engaged in a work of infinitely greater importance; give me any subject to preach on of more consequence than the truths I bring to you, and I will preach on it the next Sabbath."

He was of all men "good at the uptake," and perpetually ready. Having been denounced, he

was tried and confined for a time in his own house. One day he persuaded the sentinel to do an errand for him, while he kept guard; and the townspeople were amused beyond measure at seeing the doctor "very gravely marching before his door, the musket on his shoulder, keeping guard over himself." It was he who, assigned one sentinel and then another, and finally left to his own devices, remarked that he had been "guarded, re-guarded, and disre-guarded." It was he who, when two of the selectmen stuck fast in a slough, and alighted to pull out their chaise, said to them respectfully, "Gentlemen, I have often complained to you of this nuisance without any attention being paid to it, and I am very glad to see you stirring in the matter now."

It was he who, on the Dark Day of 1780, returned word to a timorous matron who had sent her son to him for spiritual or scientific explanation, "My dear, you will give my compliments to your mamma, and tell her that I am as much in the dark as she is."

Did these shafts move Mercy Warren to laughter in spite of the jester's odious principles? Sometimes I doubt it, for in all her voluminous legacy of print and manuscript, I fail to discover one real gleam of humor; satirical fancies there are many, but no gambol-

lings for pure love of fun. But I know who did laugh, — the jovial, genial man, her husband. He could not only see a joke "by daylight," but he was one of that happy fraternity who can smell them out in every bush.

IV

THE TESTIMONY OF LETTERS

The most casual glance at the correspondence of Mercy Warren is enough to send the mind fondly and appealingly in another direction, — toward that chapter in Cranford where dear Miss Matty goes over the letters of her "ever-honoured father" and "dearly-beloved mother," prior to laying them on a sacred funeral pyre; for one grieves that the real woman had not been beset with the worldly longings of the imaginary one, or that, having them, she had shamed to put them in words. One feels like praying Mrs. Warren to chronicle her desire for a "white Paduasoy," or her need of instruction about the "pig-killing." No hope of that! she is painfully abstract, and, so far as her correspondence bears witness, she lived upon stilts. She seldom indulges in a request so severely practical as that of Abigail Adams to her husband at Philadelphia, in 1775: —

"Purchase me a bundle of pins and put them in your trunk for me. The cry for pins is so great that what I used to buy for seven shillings and sixpence are now twenty shillings, and not to be had for that. A bundle contains six thousand, for which I used to give a dollar; but if you can procure them for fifty shillings, or three pounds, pray let me have them."

Expect nothing from her as to "dammasks, padusoy, gauze, ribbins, flapets, flowers, new white hats, . . . garments, orniments." Nay, she not only, as might be expected, clings to the stately phraseology of the period, but it is never bent to the unworthy uses of small beer. Her mind goes ever rustling about in stiff brocade. Those were the days of an ultra-refinement of speech. Youths and maidens did not baldly fall in love; their "affections were engaged." There was much talk of "hearts endowed with the most exquisite sensibility," of "sentiment the most refined, expressed in a nervous and elegant style," and the marriage ceremony endowed one with a "partner," a "companion," or, term of decorous restraint, a "friend." And of all this verbal euphuism Mrs. Warren is mistress supreme.

One strikingly characteristic letter is that wherein she avows to her husband her intention of ignoring politics for the time being,

having so many items of domestic interest to tell him. The mind starts up in pleased alertness. Now at last we are to know something actual about the stately dame! Thereupon she describes a memorable walk with her sister, Mrs. Otis. After a general allusion to the "Beauties of Nature," she adds: "We moved from field to field & from orchard to orchard with many Reflections on the tumultuous joy of the Great and the gay and the restless anxieties of political life. Nothing was wanting to compleat the felicity of this Hour of Rural Enjoyment but the Company of Strephon & Collin Whose observations might have improved the understanding while their presence would have gladdened the Hearts of their favorite Nymphs."

Reflections, forsooth! Catch up thy skirts, dear dame, now thou art out of door, and caper away to the oaten pipe! We shall love thee the better for it.

You can never, so to speak, take her unreservedly to your heart. Moreover, she is too academic to appeal often to a reader through those engaging lapses of spelling so endearing in the writers of an earlier day. When Abigail Adams apologizes for a long silence by saying that she has not used the pen on account of "a very bad soar finger," the very

heart in one's bosom goes out to her; she compensates, in a measure, for our past suffering in learning to spell. But little of that engaging sort can be expected of Mrs. Warren. Her errors are very infrequent; she is capable of knowing more or less about "simme colings, nots of interrigations, peorids, commoes," and the like, and though her style and expression are often sufficiently imperfect, it is seldom through forgetfulness or lack of care. She was evidently as closely attached to her husband as it is possible for a wife to be; yet throughout her letters she addresses him with a measured decorum as her friend, only breaking out in sudden flame under stress of great loneliness and longing into "the best friend of my heart." Not such is Margaret Winthrop's yearning tenderness, nor Anne Bradstreet's pathetic rhymed lamenting in the absence of her dear.

James Warren had no such epistolary restraint. He evidently felt himself to be a plain man, with no special knack of expression. "I never write well," he says to one intimate correspondent; but his letters are so graphic, so full of a homely humor, that one turns to them with a breath of relief after the stately perorations of his spouse. He has no hesitation in expressing his love for her in other than measured terms. She is his "saint,"

his "little angel," his "beloved." When she is absent, he misses her beyond expression. In May, 1763, he writes her from Plymouth, while she is making a visit in Boston: —

"I took Winslow from School as I came into town. his first Enquiry was for the pretty things. The Trumpet satisfied his wishes & made him for a while Happy. Charles has forgot you & is indifferent to me, is as fond of Aunt Nabby as he ever was of his Mamma. she is very fond of him, & returns his affection for her in a degree that you would rather wish than Expect.

. . . I need not tell you that I am uneasy without you, that I wish for the time I am to return. In short I feel so little satisfaction in my own mind the Days are so tedious & every thing appears so different without you."

Another letter, written from Concord, April 6, 1775, is so instinct with the despairing patriotism of the day, and ends so sweetly human in his boyish fondness for her, that our hearts go out to him anew: —

My dear Mercy, — Four days ago I had full Confidence that I should have had the pleasure of being with you this day, we were then near closeing the Session. Last Saturday we came near to an Adjournment, were almost equally divided on that question, the principle argument that seem[d] to pre-

ponderate, & turn in favour of setting into this week was the prospect of News & News we have, last week things wore rather a favourable aspect, but alas how uncertain are our prospects. Sunday evening brought us Accounts of a Vessel at Marblehead from Falmouth, & the English Papers &c by her. I have no need to recite particulars you will have the whole in the Papers, & wont wonder at my forgoeing the pleasure of being with you. I dare say you would not desire to see me till I could tell you that I had done all in my power to secure & defend us & our Country. We are no longer at a loss what is Intended us by our dear Mother. We have ask^{d} for Bread and she gives us a Stone, & a serpent for a Fish, however my Spirits are by no means depress^{d}, you well know my Sentiments of the Force of both Countrys, you know my opinion of the Justness of our Cause, you know my Confidence in a Righteous Providence. I seem to want nothing to keep up my Spirits & to Inspire me with a proper resolution to Act my part well in this difficult time but seeing you in Spirits, & knowing that they flow from the heart, how shall I support myself if you suffer these Misfortunes to prey on your tender frame & add to my difficulties an affliction too great to bear of itself. the Vertuous should be happy under all Circumstances. This state of things will last but a little while. I believe we shall have many chearful rides together yet. we proposed last week a short adjournment & I had in a manner Engaged a Chamber

here for my Beloved & pleased myself with the health & pleasure the Journey was to give her, but I believe it must be postponed till some Event takes place & changes the face of things. All things wear a warlike appearance here. this Town is full of Cannon, ammunition stores &c &c & the army long for them & they want nothing but strength to Induce an attempt on them. the people are ready & determined to defend this Country Inch by Inch. The Inhabitants of Boston begin to move. the Selectmen & Committee of Correspondence are to be with us . . . but to dismiss publick matters let me ask how you do & how do my little Boys especially my little Henry who was Complaining. I long to see you. I long to set with you under our Vines &c & have none to make us afraid. . . . I intend to fly Home I mean as soon as Prudence Duty & Honour will permitt.

April 7th

The moving of the Inhabitants of Boston if Effected will be one Grand Move. I hope one thing will follow another till America shall appear Grand to all the world. I begin to think of the Trunks which may be ready against I come home. we perhaps may be forced to Move: if we are let us strive to submit to the dispensations of Providence with Christian resignation & Phylosophick dignity. God has given you great abilities. you have improved them in great Acquirements. You are possess^{d} of Eminent Virtues & distin-

guished Piety. for all these I Esteem I Love you in a degree that I can't Express. they are all now to be called into action for the good of mankind for the good of your friends, for the promotion of virtue & patriotism. don't let the fluttering of your Heart Interrupt your Health or disturb your repose. believe me I am continually Anxious about you. ride when the weather is good & don't work or read too much at other times. I must bid you adieu. God Almighty Bless You no letter yet what can it mean, is she not well she can't forget me or have any objections to writing.

"She can't forget me!" And this lover's doubt after more than twenty years of married life! All the delicate fears of love were with him still.

But James Warren was no just critic of his own limitations. "I never express myself well!" On the contrary, when he had something to say, his prose became so simple, homely, and natural (as befits the word of a man of action), that we would not for worlds give it in exchange for gilded rhetoric. Read his message on a day after a greater one, and conjure up the picture therein: —

WATERTOWN June 18 1775

MY DEAR MERCY, — The Extraordinary Nature of the Events which have taken place in the last 48 Hours have Interrupted that steady & only In-

tercourse which the situation of publick affairs allows me. the Night before last our Troops possess[d] themselves of a Hill in Charlestown & had time only to heave up an Imperfect Breastwork the regular Troops from the Batterys in Boston & two Men of War in the Ferryway began early next Morning a Heavy Fire on them which was Continued till about Noon when they Landed a large Number of Troops & after a stout resistance & great Loss on their side dispossessed our Men, who with the Accumulated disadvantages of being Exposed to the fire of their Cannon & the want of Ammunition & not being supported by fresh Troops were obliged to abandon the Town & retire to our Lines towards Cambridge to which they made a very handsome addition last Night. with a Savage Barbarity never practised among Civilized Nations they fired, & have utterly destroyed the Town of Charlestown. We have had this day at Dinner another alarm that they were Advancing on our Lines, after having reinforced their Troops with their Horse &c & that they were out at Roxbury. We Expected this would have been an Important day. they are reinforced but have not Advanced so things remain at present as they were. We have killed them many Men & have killed & wounded about an hundred by the best Accounts I can get, among the first of whom to our inexpressible Grief is My Friend Doct[r] Warren who was kill[d] it is supposed in the Lines on the Hill at Charlestown in a Manner more Glorious to him-

self than the fate of Wolf on the plains of Abraham. Many other officers are wounded & some kill[d]. it is Impossible to describe the Confusion in this place, Women & Children flying into the Country armed Men Going to the field & wounded Men returning from there fil the Streets. I shant attempt a description. Your Brother borrowed a Gun &c & went among the flying Bullets at Charlestown ret[d] last Evening 10 o'clock. the Librarian got a slight wound with a musket Ball in his head. Howland has this Minute come in with your Letter. The Continental Congress have done & are doing every thing we can wish D[r] Church ret[d] last Evening & Bro[t] resolutions for assuming Gov[t] & for supplying provisions & powder & he tells us tho under the rose that they are Contemplating & have perhaps finished the Establishment of the Army & an Emission of money to pay & support them & he thinks the operations of yesterday will be more than sufficient to Induce them to recommend the Assumption of new forms of Gov[t] to all the Colonies. I wish I could be more perticular. I am now on a Committee of Importance & only steal time to add sentences seperately. I feel for my Dear Wife least her apprehensions should hurt her health, be not concerned about me, take care of your self. You can secure a retreat & have proper Notice in Season, & if you are safe & the Boys I shall be happy fall what will to my Interest. I cant be willing you should come into this part of the Country at present. I will see you as soon as

possible, cant say when, the mode of Gov^{t} prescribd is according to the last Charter. some are quite satisfied with it you know I wish^{d} for a more perfect one. it is now Monday Morning. I hear nothing yet but the roaring of Cannon below, but no Body regards them. I need not say that I long to see you, perhaps never more in my life. I shall try hard for it this week. I hope your strawberries are well taken care of & that you have fine feasting on them. Your Brother is waiting for Freeman who with all his patriotism has left us for 10 days. I have Letters from both M^{r} Adams & Cushing. I can't Inclose them, because I must answer them when I can get opp^{y} I am calld on & must Conclude with my wishes & prayer for yr Happiness & with Love to my Boys & regards to Friends your aff Husband

JA^{s} WARREN

S. Adams is very unwell the jaundice to a great degree & his spirits somewhat depress^{d}. Church hopes he will recover. I hope some of us will survive this Contest.

Church has put into my hands a Curious Letter full of Interesting Intelligence I wish I could give it to you you may remember to ask me about it & the Author. I have shown it to Coll. Otis if he goes before me enquire of him. Your Brother Jem dined with us yesterday behaved well till dinner was almost done & then in the old way got up went off where I know not, has been about at Cambridge & Roxbury several days.

Who is not thrilled by this simple picture of a noble mind o'erthrown, — the mad patriot, James Otis, wandering about, confused by the clamor of the time and totally incapable of dominating it! The touch of yearning human tenderness completing the message is sweet beyond measure. With the smoke of battle still in the foreground of his day, James Warren could picture his little angel in her green retreat, and hope she had fine feasting! No wonder Mercy Warren adored the friend of her heart.

There was a great deal of love in this Plymouth household,—hearty, wholesome love; and one letter, where Mrs. Warren does actually unbend, shows her at her best, moved by maternal pride and joy. It was written September 21, 1775, after one of her frequent absences from home: —

> Just as I [got] up from dinner this day yours of the 15 & 18 came to hand; No desert was ever more welcome to a luxurious pallate, it was a regale to my longing mind: I had been eagerly looking for more than a week for a line from the best friend of my heart.
>
> I had contemplated to spend a day or two with my good father, but as you talk of returning so soon I shall give up that and every other pleasure this world can give for the superior pleasure of your company. I thank you for the many expressions in yours which bespeak the most affec-

tionate soul, or heart warmed with friendship & esteem which it shall ever be my assiduous care to merit. — but as I am under some apprehensions that you will be again disappointed and your return postponed, I will endeavor to give you some account of the reception I met from our little family on my arrival among them after an absence which they thought long: your requesting this as an agreeable amusement is a new proof that the Father is not lost in the occupations of the statesman.

I found Charles & Henry sitting on the steps of the front door when I arrived — they had just been expressing their ardent wishes to each other that mamah would come in before dinner when I turned the corner having our habitation. One of them had just finished an exclamation to the other "Oh what would I give if mamah was now in sight," you may easily judge what was their rapture when they saw their wishes instantly compleated.

The one leaped into the street to meet me — the other ran into the house in an extacy of joy to communicate the tidings, & finding my children well at this sickly season you will not wonder that with a joy at least equal to theirs I ran hastily into the entry; but before I had reached the stair top was met by all the lovely flock. Winslow half affronted that I had delayed coming home so long & more than half happy in the return of his fond mother, turned up his smiling cheek to receive a

kiss while he failed in the effort to command the grave muscles of his countenance.

George's solemn brow was covered with pleasure & his grave features not only danced in smiles but broke into a real laugh more expressive of his heartfelt happiness than all the powers of language could convey and before I could sit down and lay aside my riding attire all the choice gleanings of the Garden were offered each one pressing before the other to pour the yellow produce into their mamah's lap.

Not a complaint was uttered — not a tale was told through the day but what they thought would contribute to the happiness of their best friend; but how short lived is human happiness. The ensuing each one had his little grievance to repeat, as important to them as the laying an unconstitutional tax to the patriot or the piratical seazure of a ship & cargo, after much labour & the promissing expectation of profitable returns when the voyage was compleat — but the umpire in your absence soon accommodated all matters to mutual satisfaction and the day was spent in much cheerfulness encircled by my sons. . . . My heart has just leaped in my bosom and I ran to the stairs imagining I heard both your voice & your footsteps in the entry. Though disappointed I have no doubt this pleasure will be realized as soon as possible by

Your affectionate

M. Warren.

James Warren is constantly expressing his joy over the appointment of Washington and Lee; and on this question, as on all others of a political nature, his wife was in accord with him. One of his letters, written to John Adams, contains a paragraph strangely prophetic of the reward his own services were to receive:—

July 7, 1775.

I am Content to Move in a small Sphere. I expect no distinction but that of an honest Man who has Exerted every Nerve. You and I must be Content without a Slice from the great pudding now on the Table.

As to his wife, her most serious apprehensions were for him. She had an abiding faith, broken only by occasional seasons of gloom, that the republic would live; but it often seemed to her that it could only continue at the sacrifice of what was dearer to her than life itself. September 13, 1776, she writes "James Warren Esq. att Watertown":—

. . . I am grieved at the Advantages Gained by our Enemies and anxious for our friends at New York but I own my Little Heart is more affected with what gives pain or endangers you than with everything else. What do you mean by the part you must bear in the Late Military Call, or why suppose any pity excited in my Breast but

what I daily feel for a man whose Constant application and fatigue is sufficient to Break the finest Constitution and to wear out the spirits unless supported by Grace as well as Resolution. do be more Explicit. I hope Nothing is Like to carry you farther from me. When my head was layed on my pillow Last Night my Heart was Rent with the Apprehension. your Life is of Great Value Both to the public & to the family as well as to one who would be Miserable without you. Could I be assured you would not be exposed in the field your refusal to go to philadelphia would give me the slightest pleasure, but a certain appointment was dreaded by me for many months — & has been a source of pain to me ever since it was accepted. I ever was sensible it would cost you much Labour & trouble even if you should Never be Called to action & if you should — I forbear to tell my fears — if I thought that was probable I believe I should almost persuade you to Go to Philadelphia but I know not what is best. I desire therefore to leave you in the Care of Providence & to trust in the divine protection to guard and guide your steps whithersoever you go.

I fear this people have been too confident of their own strength. We have been Ready to say our own arms shall save us instead of looking to the God of Battle. . . . I shall write again tomorrow knowing you will not be tired of seeing the signature of your Beloved &

Affectionate

MARCIA.

Dont think I am discouraged . . . when I write my thought so freely & fully. I seem to feel this day & Evening amidst a thousand gloomy fears as if our God was about to Bring us deliverance by means which we cannot foresee. the less we have to hope from man the stronger is my confidence in Him Who presideth over the Earth and will be Glorify d in His doing, and many times when we are Ready to say with peter Lord help for we are sinking then is His arm stretched out to save.

To judge the serious and weighty character of Mrs. Warren's letters, it is necessary to anticipate the events of her life and view her correspondence as a whole. It was when she wrote her sons, especially her son Winslow, who lived long abroad, that she gave full sway to her besetting vice of dwelling upon the true and the beautiful to the exclusion of all the homely affairs of life. Winslow grew up to be a handsome, brilliant young man, decidedly his mother's favorite. At least, she gave him that adoring love, mingled with pain, which belongs to the creature of shining qualities who is especially attracted to a life of pleasure. She displays the keenest solicitude lest he fall into the snares lurking everywhere for youth. She asserts again and again, with a certain pitiful whistling to keep her courage up, that

she knows he will not be attracted by sin; and then she refers to the "solicitude of a tender parent" as her reason for continuing in page after page of declamatory moralizing, which, in all respect be it said, no merely human young man could be expected to tolerate, even if he were so filial as to read it. Indeed, that aspect of the case occurs to her also; and after extended disquisitions upon nature and the moralities, she fancies her son replying, "Does my Good Mother forget that too much Moralizing tires, and too much Reasoning often chills the Mind?" This is pleasantry, but it is pertinent to the case. Even when she descends to what is for her a very light-minded sort of trifling, she proceeds with the stateliness of a literary minuet. In the failure of letters, she speculates on the possibility of their being lost at sea, adding: —

"But if most of them as is probable are Devoted to the Oozy Nymphs who attend the Watry God below it may serve as an Interlude amidst the Variety of political packages consigned to their perusal in these Days of danger and uncertainty."

This is grave fooling, and not entirely unconsidered; but it is much from so serious a pen. Fancy, in the days when letters were weeks on their weary passage over what was

so truly the "estranging sea," taking up a closely written missive, all the more precious for having achieved so stormy a flight, and finding it a homily upon spiritual life! Scarcely a word of the Plymouth news, the farm, the willow-trees where the exile cut his whistles when a boy; nothing but a desire that he may inherit "the things that are more excellent." The father's letters, on the contrary (for he in his simple human kindness is always quite unconsciously challenging comparison with his wife), are full of homely details; and especially in the latter part of his life, when he writes the farm news to his son Henry, does his account of the pigs, the ducks, the hoeing, transport the reader to the very spot, and make him long with the writer for a much-needed rain. To read Mrs. Warren at what she would consider her best, and what seems to us her very worst state of literary abandon, one need not go further than her letter "to a youth just entered Colledge." It need not be pursued to the bitter end, but perhaps we shall find ourselves, like Affery, the better for "a dose." It was written in 1772: —

"If my dear son was not sensible her affection was so great that she never could forget him while she remembers anything, he might be able to

suspect it from the late unusual silence of his mother; but a variety of cares united with an indifferent state of health, since you last left me, has prevented by renewed precepts to endeavour to fortify the mind of a youth who, I flatter myself, is well disposed against the snares of vice and the contagion of bad example, which like an army of scorpions lie in wait to destroy. — I do not much fear that I shall ever be subjected to much disappointment or pain for any deviations in a son like yourself, yet when I consider how eassily the generallity of youth are misled, either by novel opinions or unprincipled companions, and how easily they often glide into the path of folly and how imperceptibly led into the mazes of error, I tremble for my children. Happy beyond expression will you be, my son, if amidst the laudable prosperity of youth and its innocent amusements: you ever keep that important period in view which must wind up this fleeting existence, and land us on that boundless shore where the profligate can no longer soothe himself in the silken dream of pleasure or the infidel entertain any further doubts of the immortality of his deathless soul. May the Great Guardian of Virtue, the source, the fountain of everlasting truth watch over and ever preserve you from the baleful walks of vice, and the devious and not less baneful track of the bewildered sceptic.

"What vigilance is necessary when the solicitations of thoughtless companions on the one side,

and the clamour of youthful passions on the other, plead for deviations: and ever stand ready to excuse the highest instances of indulgence to depraved appetite. If you escape uncontaminated it must be in some measure by learning easily to discriminate between the unoffending mirth of the generous and openhearted and the designed flighty vagaries of the virulent and narrowminded man."

More even than any word of her own do the letters of James Warren, while he is absent at Watertown, disclose the estimation in which he holds his wife's intelligence, and his acquiescence in her connection with public affairs. There is no question of withholding from her any news of state, except it be of a private nature. She walks step by step with him. He trusts her discretion, her secrecy, her judgment. It is only when there is a possibility of letters miscarrying, as they did miscarry in those troublous times, that he retains some piece of vital news until he shall see her and communicate it by word of mouth.

And she is as discreet in her use of intelligence as he in its transmission. All are solicitous to know what he writes from the seat of affairs, she informs him; but she is cautious. "I tell them you are too much engaged in devising means for their salvation

to indulge yourself in writing so much as we wish." She and Mrs. Adams had unconsciously succeeded in convincing two at least of the first men of the time that women need not be excluded from the graver matters of life. In 1776, John Adams writes Mrs. Warren, with his habitual air of gallantry, which by no means proved him the less sincere: —

"The Ladies I think are the greatest Politicians that I have the Honour to be acquainted with, not only because they act upon the Sublimest of all the Principles of Policy, viz, that Honesty is the best Policy but because they consider Questions more coolly than those who are heated with Party Zeal and inflamed with the bitter Contentions of active public life."

Again, after pages devoted to frank discussion of the great questions of the Revolution, he continues: —

"This is a very grave and solemn Discourse to a Lady. True, and I thank God, that his Providence has made me Acquainted with two Ladies at least who can bear it."

Like all those actors in a great cause who value the deed and care not who bears away the palm, John Adams, at this juncture, is frankness itself in confessing his need of counsel. He is constantly besieging James

Warren with a running fire of speculations and hard questions, and quite as a matter of course he includes Mrs. Warren in the circle of his advisers. One letter of hers in answer to a forgotten query hints prophetically at the beginning of those fears by which she was tormented when, at the end of the Revolution, it seemed as if America might forget the simplicity of earlier days.

PLIMOUTH March 10 1776

DEAR SIR, — As your time is so much Devoted to the service of the publick that you have little Leisure for letters of friendship or amusement, and Conscious of Incapacity to write anything that would be of the smallest utility to the common weal, I have been for some time Ballancing in my Mind Whether I should again Interrupt your Important Moments. but on Reperusing yours of January 8, I find a query unanswered. And though the asking my opinion in so momentous a question as the form of government to be preferred by a people who have an opportunity to shake off the fetters both of Monarchic & Aristocratic Tyranny Might be Designed to Ridicule the sex for paying any Attention to political matters yet I shall venture to give you a serious Reply. And notwithstanding the Love of Dress, Dancing, Equipage, Finery & folly Notwithstanding the fondness for fashion predominating so strongly in the female Mind, I hope never to see an American Mon-

archy, However fashionable in Europe or However it Might Coencide with the taste for Elegance and pleasure in the one sex or cooperate with the Interests or passions of the Other. I have Long been an Admirer of a Republican form of Government. And was convinced even before I saw the Advantages deliniated in so Clear & Concise a manner by your masterly pen that if Established upon the Genuine principles of equal Liberty it was a form productive of Many Excellent qualities & heroic Virtues in Human Nature which often lie Dormant for want of opportunities for Exertion and the Heavenly Spark is smothered in the Corruption of Courts, or the Lustre obscured in the Pompous Glare of Regal pageantry. . . . However we may Indulge the pleasing Revery and Look forward with Delight on the well Compacted Government & Happy Establishment of the Civil police of the united Colonies yet with you sir I have my fears that American Virtue has not yet Reached the sublime pitch which is Necessary to Bafle the arts of the Designing & to counteract the weakness of the timid, as well as to Resist the pecuniary temptations and Ambitious Wishes which will arise in the Breasts of More Noble minded & exalted Individuals if not Carefully Guarded.

But Mrs. Warren's relation to her husband happily betrays the softer, albeit, as it might seem to her, the weaker side of her nature. The letters between these two loving souls

disclose that which draws us closer to the woman than we are ever drawn by respect for her stately presence. We penetrate their inner confidence to find her "pure womanly" in her nervous imaginings and apprehensions. She was unalterably brave and even stoical in intention, but sometimes only by dint of shutting her teeth and holding on. A creature of fine nervous organization, she was "capable of fears." Like the best as well as the weaker of her sex, she was cruelly beset by the "vapours." Hers was the precursor of the American type, ready heroically for an emergency, able to stand with unmoved face in the van of battle, but so delicately made as to become the prey of formless dread and vague anticipation. For all her heroics, Mercy Warren was absolutely feminine, and with her husband she did not live always upon the high plane of intellectual superiority. It was her imagination which led her into quagmires, and she had no hesitation in confessing that she did a deal of whistling to keep her courage up. Several of her letters are interspersed with pathetic little wailings for his absence.

In 1775, she writes from Plymouth: —

"I awaked this day . . . trembling under the agitations of a frightful dream — you know me so

well I should not be afraid of being called superstitious if I was to give you the dream and my interpretation thereof — but I will only tell you I could not but reflect . . . whether we were not arrived at that difficult strait where there is no passing or retreating — and that the props the supports & the strength of my family may be among the first who sink beneath the torrent — but all Dreams fancys or allegories apart — I seriously wish there was any equitable decent & honourable method devised to put an end to the contest — and be again reconciled to old friends — not that I have the least doubt of the final success of so righteous a Cause — but I Greatly fear some of the worthyest characters in the present Generation will fall in the Conflict — and perhaps the whole land be involved in blood."

When, in 1776, General Lee fell into the hands of the enemy, she was depressed indeed. Then did she write her "Dearest Friend": —

"The political Clouds at the southward with the Gathering Blackness towards the North with the stormy appearance of the Natural World at this season has an affect upon my spirits. timidity Vexation Grief & Resentment Alternately rise in my disturbed Bosom. yet I struggle to Resume that Dignity of Character that philosophic & Religious Resignation you so often Recommend till I feel the Courage of an Heroine & the Intrepidity of a Roman matron. But I am soon dissolved into

weakness when I Recollect that the Dissolution of the tenderest ties may be at hand, that every social joy is at stake & that I may be left a naked helpless Vine without the Ceder or Its Branch to defend me from the Rude storms . . . on the American shores."

James Warren was precisely the man to deal with this temperament, — a nature near the good brown earth, wholesome, sweet, and equable. He rallies her delicately upon her "vapours." Thus he writes her from Boston, June 6, 1779: —

My dear Mercy, — I have read one Excellent Sermon this day & heard two others. what next can I do better than write to a Saint. what if she has Trembling Nerves & a palpitating Heart. She has good Sense. She has Exalted Virtue & refined Piety. She is amiable even in that weakness which is the consequence of the Exquisite delicacy & softness of her sex. she would be so to me if she had more of that rough fortitude which the Times & the circumstances pictured in her Letter of ye 2^{d} Instant rec^{d} Yesterday may seem to you to require. all Nature is a Mystery. why then should I attempt to explore the reasons, & to say how it is that a mind possessed of a Masculine Genius well stocked with learning fortified by Philosophy & Religion should be so easily Impressed by the adverse circumstances or Incon-

veniencys of this world, but they will happen whether we can account for it or not. A brilliant & Busy Imagination often if not always accompanys great qualities. it commands admiration but is often Mischievous, & when yours is not directed to the bright side of things I often wish it as sluggish as my own. but I long to Banter & Laugh you out of your Whimsical Gloom. What! want Fortitude because I have Faith. Curious indeed. Be unhinged because self Interest Wickedness & wicked Men abound. when was it otherwise. it is Glorious to defeat them and after all the Struggle what? why secure to ourselves and entail to Posterity Independence Peace & Happiness. this is a subject for an Heroic Poem. rouse therefore your Muse. Tune it with Nervous harmony to Celebrate the sweep of this great struggle & the Characters of those whose Integrity & Virtue have defeated the Policy & Force of our Enemies, & above all that Providence by whose direction I verily believe without a doubt we shall be saved.

A fragment, written in 1779, is to the same tune: —

"I am glad to find you are better, but strange it is how you suffer your Imagination Instead of giving you & all your friends delight & pleasure to torment you with anxious fears & gloomy apprehensions & by that means give your Friends Pain. Evils there are in the world & will attack us sooner or later but certainly our anxieties cant avoid or

delay them . . . We have no sight of the French Fleet yet. I recd last evening my answer to a Billet I wrote the Admiral . . . & am this morning to have a Visit from his Excellency so I must hasten to put on my best Bib, for our Marine Officers who dined on B^{d} yesterday I believe have led him to expect to see a great Man . . . if you Love me Enjoy the Goods of Providence with a Chearful Grateful Mind and at least imagine that our Lines are in a pleasant place."

But though he rallies her, it is not through lack of apprehension. On April 2, 1780, he writes from Boston: —

My dear Mercy, — I am just returned from public worship. the next act of religion is to write to my beloved wife . . . Don't however think I am in the shades of gloom & despondency. I see & find difficulties from every quarter but my faith & Hope are as strong as ever. . . . When shall I hear from you. My affection is strong, my anxieties are many about you. you are alone, you are very social, your sensations are strong, your frame is delicate, the weather is cold &c &c. if you are not well & happy how can I be so. if you are few things can make me otherwise.

She was not always repining. December 29, 1776, she writes him: —

"Man is a strange being & it has often been said that Woman is a still more unaccountable

Creature: I know not how it is, but notwithstanding the present Gloomy aspect of affairs my spirits do not flag with regard to the great public cause: they rather rise on misfortune — I some how or other feel as if all these things were for the best — as if good would come out of evil — we may be brought low that our faith may not be in the wisdom of man but in the protecting providence of God."

Often as she flies to him for comfort and for strength, so often does she reassure him. On March 29, 1790, she writes urgently from Plymouth, begging to know when he is coming, and adding: "Yet depend upon it, I behave very well & keep up my spirits remarkably." "Do not let your mind suffer the smallest anxiety on my account."

She is never tired of showing a frank admiration of his courage and ability. She tells him: "Your spirit I admire — were a few thousands on the Continent of a similar disposition we might defy the power of Britain."

But however the political game may go, she longs continually for his presence. It is in 1777 that she writes him from "Plimouth": —

"It is a matter of equal indifference with me whether I am in the City or the Villa provided I have the Company of that man of whose friendship

I have had more than twenty years Experience & without whom Life has few Charms for me."

Only secondary to her desire for his company is her longing for letters. June 1, 1777, she writes from Plymouth: —

My dearest Friend, — What a Letter every day. yes why not. I wish for one & why not forward one to a person who Loves them as well as myself. Shall I go on & give a Reason Ask another question & then answer it my self. yes. why then truly they are not Worth so much stating the intrinsic Value of both taking into Consideration the difference of your situation & mine your superiority of character your advantages of Intelligence and the Exchange must be rated at Least fifteen for one. I own the paper I deal in is Depreciated while I estimate the Returns at the true sterling value. but as you are a Generous Dealer you will take no advantages Least you soon Reduce me to bankruptcy & oblige me to throw up my pen in despair.

She thinks of him with an unchanging constancy. She begins and ends her year in longing for him. This, on December 30, 1777: —

"This extream Cold Season gives me great Concern for you who Can so illy bear the severity of Winter more especially from your own fireside

where it is the study of Every one to make you happy. oh! these painful absences. ten thousand anxieties Invade my Bosom on your account & some times hold my Lids waking Many hours of the Cold & Lonely Night, but after a day or two has succeeded such a Restless Night & no Ill tidings arrive, my Restless Bosom is again hushed into peace & I can calmly hope the same providential Care which has hitherto protected will preserve your Valuable Life. yet when I reflect how many years have Rolled over our heads we have Little Reason to Expect many more should be added to the Tale."

To return to the beginning of the struggle is to find her confiding her anxious forebodings to Mrs. Macaulay Graham: —

"Ere this reaches your hand you will doubtless have seen the resolves of the provincial & the result of the Continental Congress — perhaps there never was any human law to which mankind so religiously & so generally adhered as the Americans do to the resolutions of those assemblies — and now a firm undaunted persevering people with the sword half drawn from the scabbard are patiently waiting the effects of those measures. . . . but if pacific measures do not soon take place none can wonder that a timid woman should tremble for the consequences — more especially one connected by the tenderest tie to a gentleman whose principles & conduct in this province may expose

him to fall an early victim either in the day of Battle or by the hand of vindictive Power.

"Will you pardon me Madam if I own that my apprehensions are sometimes awake least Britain should be infatuated enough to push the unhappy Americans to the last appeal — I behold the civil sword brandished over our heads & an innocent land drenched in blood — I see the inhabitants of our plundered cities quitting the elegancies of life, possessing nothing but their freedom — taking refuge in the forests — I behold faction & discord tearing up an Island we once held dear as our own inheritance and a mighty Empire long the dread of distant nations, tott'ring to the very foundation."

And then, as some sort of intellectual balm, she begs Mrs. Graham for "the indulgence of a few more of your excellent sentiments & judicious observations."

V

THE WOMAN'S PART

While the men of the Colonies were risking life and fortune in the building of a nation, the women were bearing as uncomplainingly the great burden of patience. They frowned upon amusements while their country should be in anxious mood. They forswore the luxuries of every-day life, electing to be clad in homespun rather than commerce with the British market. "I hope," wrote Mrs. Cushing, "there are none of us but would sooner wrap ourselves in sheep and goat skins than buy English goods of a people who have insulted us in such a scandalous manner." They discountenanced the use of mourning, because it was imported from England. With their families, they gave up eating lamb and mutton, that the sheep might be devoted instead to the production of wool for clothing. When the time came for battle, they not only sacrificed the lead of window-panes, but their precious pewter to the making of bullets. The

Daughters of Liberty were enrolling themselves, and in 1769, Hannah Winthrop writes Mrs. Warren: —

"I went to see Mrs. Otis the other day. She seems not to be in a gòod state of health. I received a Visit lately from Master Jemmy. I will give you an anecdote of him. A gentleman telling him what a Fine lady his mama is & he hoped he would be a good Boy & behave exceeding well to her, my young Master gave this spirited answer, I know my Mama is a fine Lady, but she would be a much finer if she was a Daughter of Liberty."

Thus was the younger generation preparing to fill the ranks when their fathers should fail or perish. But most heroic denial of all, these women of the Colonies gave up their cherished tea. In 1768, the students of Harvard College bound themselves to use no more of "that pernicious herb," and they were not alone. Scores of families in Boston had also agreed to forswear it, and the rage for holy abstinence spread until invention was swift to find expedients to take its place. A sternness of denial sprang up everywhere at the mention of the word "tea." In 1774, John Adams writes his wife from Falmouth (Portland): —

"When I first came to this house it was late in the afternoon, and I had ridden thirty-five

miles at least. 'Mādam,' said I to Mrs. Huston, 'is it lawful for a weary traveller to refresh himself with a dish of tea, provided it has been honestly smuggled, or paid no duties?' 'No, sir,' said she, 'we have renounced all tea in this place, but I 'll make you coffee.' Accordingly I have drank coffee every afternoon since and have borne it very well. Tea must be universally renounced, and I must be weaned, and the sooner the better."

The ladies especially, like those of a later generation, had loved their tea and made it the enlivening influence at stately gatherings. Abigail Adams, when abroad with her husband, sighed for the remembered joys of those bygone meetings, and Mrs. Warren replied to her, in 1785, in sympathetic kind: —

"You seem to wish for the afternoon interviews of your country, which custom has rendered an agreeable hour. I assure you we miss you much at the little tea parties."

The continuance of denial hardened into a national habit. We became a nation of coffee drinkers, — a state of things not at all to be expected from our English fostering. Dame Warren was not sufficiently addicted to gossip over concrete affairs to hint at her own stand in the matter. She never tells us whether she drank Liberty tea, and whether at Clifford

Farm she went out to gather innocent herbs, free of duty, and prepared them for drying with her own hands. Neither can we assert from any but internal evidence that she made use of raspberry leaves, currant or sage, the virtues of which she must have known. But her thorough-going nature was not one to "come tardy off." She was the very woman to make her daily cup of some native product, and glory in the drinking. But with the great tea-making in Boston Harbor she had an intimate after-connection. One of the most telling of her poems born of public events owes its inception to John Adams, and his hearty and outspoken delight in the Boston Tea Party. On December 22, 1773, he writes James Warren from Boston: —

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Warren and tell her that I want a poetical genius — to describe the late Frolic among the Sea Nymphs and Goddesses — there being a scarcity of Nectar and Ambrosia among the Celestials of the Sea, Neptune has determined to substitute Hyson and Congo and for some of the inferiour Divinities Bohea. . . . The Syrens should be introduced somehow I can't tell how and Proteus, a son of Neptune, who could sometimes flow like Water, and sometimes burn like Fire, bark like a Dog, howl like a Wolf, whine like an Ape, cry like a Crocodile, or roar

like a Lyon — But for want of this same Poetical Genius I can do nothing. — I wish to see a late glorious Event, celebrated by a certain poetical Pen which has no equal that I know of in this Country."

The poetical pen was ready, and it is easy to imagine the haste with which it travelled; for the subject was one to appeal to Mrs. Warren in every requirement. I can think of no form of last resort which would suit her more exactly. The baited patriots had risen and asserted themselves. Better than all to her mind, they had risen dramatically. Driven to the wall, they had turned upon their tyrants and treated them to a taste of the absolutely unexpected. It was a challenging subject. It roused her to something more than her ordinary classical calm. Yet she does not propose to execute the friendly commission blindfold. On the nineteenth of January, 1774, she writes Mrs. Adams: —

" . . . If there was anybody in this part of the World that could sing the Rivals Nymphs & Celebrate the Happy Victory of Salacia in a manner that would merit Mr. Adams s approbation he may be assured it should immediately be Attempted: but I think a person who with two or three strokes of his pen has sketched out so fine a poetical plan need apply only to his own Genius for the Com-

pletion. but if he thinks it would be too great Condescension in him to Associate much with the Muses while under the direction of Apollo his time is so much more usefully & importantly fill d up a particular friend of his would be glad of a Little clearer Explanation of some of his Characters she not being well Enough Versed in ancient Mythology to know who is meant by the son of Neptune (who can so easily transform himself into the Mischievous of every species), as there are several modern proteus s to whom this docility of temper [is] equally applicable."

She is, as ever, very modest about displaying her effusion, and it is only after Mrs. Adams has begged her for something "in the poetical way" that on February 27, 1774, she is emboldened to send her two friends a "piece" formed as nearly as possible on the lines marked out by Mr. Adams, explaining that she would have done it before, save that she had hoped he would write further in regard to his tutelar deities. She says: —

"[I] must insist that this falls under the observation of none else till I hear how it stands the inspection of M^{r} Adams s judicial eye, for I will not trust the partiallity of my own sex so much as to rely on M^{rs} Adams judgment though I know her to be a Lady of taste & Decernment. If Mr Adams thinks it deserving of any further Notice

& he will point out the faults which doubtless are many, they may perhaps be corrected, when it shall be at his service. If he is silent I shall consider it as a certain Mark of disapprobation, & in despair will for the future lay aside the pen of the poet (which ought perhaps to have been done sooner) though not that of the Friend — which I Look upon as much the most amiable & Distinguish d Character."

To John Adams, what she does still betters what is done. This was, as usual, beyond praise, and he writes James Warren: —

Boston, April 9, 1774.

Dr sir, — It is a great mortification to me to be obliged to deny myself the Pleasure of a Visit to my Friends at Plymouth next Week. — But so Fate has ordained it. — I am a little Apprehensive too for the State upon this Occasion for it has heretofore received no small advantage from our Sage deliberations at your Fireside. I hope Mrs. Warren is in fine Health and Spirits — and that I have not incurred her Displeasure by making so free with the Skirmish of the Sea Deities — one of the most incontestible Evidences of real Genius, which has yet been exhibited — for to take the Clumsy, indigested Conception of another and work it into so elegant and classicall a Composition, requires Genius equall to that which

wrought another most beautifull Poem, out of the little Incident of a Gentlemans clipping a Lock of a Ladys Hair, with a Pair of scissors.

His wife had heralded the news of the tea-party, though with no poetical embroidery. On the fifth of December she had written Mrs. Warren words which rose at the end into an exultant cry: —

" . . . The tea that bainful weed is arrived. Great and I hope effectual opposition has been made to the landing of it — To the publick papers I must refer you for particulars — you will there find that the proceedings of our citizens have been united spirited and firm — The flame is kindled and like lightning it catches from soul to soul."

Mrs. Warren's poem is headed "The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs: or the Sacrifice of the Tuscararoes."

Bright Phœbus drove his rapid car amain,
And plung'd his steeds beyond the western plain,
Behind a golden skirted cloud to rest.
Ere ebon night had spread her sable vest,
And drawn her curtain o'er the fragrant vale,
Or Cynthia's shadows dress'd the lonely dale,
The heroes of the Tuscararo tribe,
Who scorn'd alike a fetter or a bribe,
In order rang'd and waited freedom's nod,
To make an offering to the wat'ry god.

Grey Neptune rose, and from his sea green bed,
He wav'd his trident o'er his oozy head;

He stretch'd, from shore to shore, his regal wand,
And bade the river deities attend;
Triton's hoarse clarion summon'd them by name,
And from old ocean call'd each wat'ry dame.

In council met to regulate the state,
Among their godships rose a warm debate,
What luscious draught they next should substitute,
That might the palates of celestials suit,
As Nectar's stream no more meandering rolls,
The food ambrosial of their social bowls
Profusely spent; — nor, can Scamander's shore,
Yield the fair sea nymphs one short banquet more.

The Titans all with one accord arous'd,
To travel round Columbia's coast propos'd;
To rob and plunder every neighb'ring vine,
(Regardless of Nemisis' sacred shrine;)
Nor leave untouch'd the peasant's little store,
Or think of right, while demi gods have power.

But nymphs and goddesses fell into squabbling over the brand of drink to be preferred.

'Till fair Salacia perch'd upon the rocks,
The rival goddess wav'd her yellow locks,
Proclaim'd, hysonia shall assuage their grief,
With choice souchong, and the imperial leaf.

The champions of the Tuscararan race,
(Who neither hold, nor even wish a place,
While faction reigns, and tyranny presides,
And base oppression o'er the virtues rides;
While venal measures dance in silken sails,
And avarice o'er earth and sea prevails;
While luxury creates such mighty feuds,
E'en in the bosoms of the demi gods;)
Lent their strong arm in pity to the fair,
To aid the bright Salacia's generous care;

Pour'd a profusion of delicious teas,
Which, wafted by a soft favonian breeze,
Supply'd the wat'ry deities, in spite
Of all the rage of jealous Amphytrite.

The fair Salacia, victory, victory, sings,
In spite of heroes, demi gods, or kings;
She bids defiance to the servile train,
The pimps and sycophants of George's reign.

The crying question of the day becomes, "What can we do without?" And Mrs. Warren appears with her pertinent occasional poem: "To the Hon. J. Winthrop, Esq. *Who, on the American Determination, in 1774, to suspend all Commerce with Britain, (except for the real Necessaries of life) requested a poetical List of the Articles the Ladies might comprise under that Head.*"

It is in her customary vein of satire. She inquires: —

But what's the anguish of whole towns in tears,
Or trembling cities groaning out their fears?
The state may totter on proud ruin's brink,
The sword be brandish'd or the bark may sink;
Yet shall Clarissa check her wanton pride,
And lay her female ornaments aside?
Quit all the shining pomp, the gay parade,
The costly trappings that adorn the maid?
What! all the aid of foreign looms refuse!
(As beds of tulips strip'd of richest hues,
Or the sweet bloom that 's nip'd by sudden frost,
Clarissa reigns no more a favorite toast.)
For what is virtue, or the winning grace,
Of soft good humour, playing round the face;

Or what those modest antiquated charms,
That lur'd a Brutus to a Portia's arms;
Or all the hidden beauties of the mind,
Compar'd with gauze, and tassels well combin'd?

. . . . . .

But does Helvidius, vigilant and wise,
Call for a schedule, that may all comprise?
'T is so contracted, that a Spartan sage,
Will sure applaud th' economizing age.

But if ye doubt, an inventory clear,
Of all she needs, Lamira offers here;
Nor does she fear a rigid Cato's frown,
When she lays by the rich embroider'd gown,
And modestly compounds for just enough —
Perhaps, some dozens of more flighty stuff;
With lawns and lustrings — blond, and mecklin laces,
Fringes and jewels, fans and tweezer cases;
Gay cloaks and hats, of every shape and size,
Scarfs, cardinals, and ribbons of all dyes;
With ruffles stamp'd, and aprons of tambour,
Tippets and handkerchiefs, at least three score;
With finest muslins that fair India boasts,
And the choice herbage from Chinesan coasts;
(But while the fragrant hyson leaf regales,
Who 'll wear the homespun produce of the vales?
For if 't would save the nation from the curse
Of standing troops; or, name a plague still worse,
Few can this choice delicious draught give up,
Though all Medea's poisons fill the cup.)
Add feathers, furs, rich sattins, and ducapes,
And head dresses in pyramidial shapes;
Side boards of plate, and porcelain profuse,
With fifty dittos that the ladies use.

. . . . . .

But though your wives in fripperies are dress'd,
And public virtue is the minion's jest,
America has many a worthy name,
Who shall, hereafter, grace the rolls of fame.

Her good Cornelias, and her Arrias fair,
Who, death, in its most hideous forms, can dare,
Rather than live vain fickle fortune's sport,
Amidst the panders of a tyrant's court;
With a long list of gen'rous, worthy men,
Who spurn the yoke, and servitude disdain;
Who nobly struggle in a vicious age,
To stem the torrent of despotic rage;
Who leagu'd, in solemn covenant unite,
And by the manes of good Hampden plight,
That while the surges lash Britannia's shore,
Or wild Ni'gara's cataracts shall roar,
And Heaven looks down, and sanctifies the deed,
They 'll fight for freedom, and for virtue bleed.

The necessity for abstinence and denial went into all the affairs of life. The question of active patriotism had little to do with abstractions. It was no small thing for men with families whom they dearly loved to pledge not only their lives and sacred honor but their fortunes to the chances of the time. Every patriot who, like John and Samuel Adams, James Warren, and all that great company, relinquished ease and preferment, judging the choice to be sweet and commendable, took the step deliberately, knowing how absolutely they risked their chances of standing well with the gods of time and place. John Adams left Abigail at Braintree to carry on the farm. James Warren left Mercy at Plymouth, and spent his time at Watertown and Cambridge. Both the husbands congrat-

ulate themselves that the wheels of domestic empire run so smoothly during their absence; and General Warren takes delight in writing Adams at Philadelphia that he has stopped to call on Mrs. Adams on his way to Watertown, and that he never saw the farm looking better. She was an excellent manager. Samuel Adams daily made the choice of poverty, and the burden, perhaps, rested more heavily on his wife than on himself; for it was only through her thrift that the family had food to eat or clothes for its back. So the catalogue of privation might be continued. Wherever there existed active patriotism, there lived also danger of suffering and denial, for women as for men.

But there was one peril more actual even than that of hunger or cold. When offensive and defensive operations had begun, it became evident that the scene of action might shift; and no woman felt for a moment sure that her roof was safe over her head. One of those who shared the flight from Cambridge after the battle of Lexington was Hannah Winthrop, who had lived so near the seat of war that the first shock and tumult left her covered with dust and smoke. After that dreadful day she writes Mercy Warren a letter, which is very intense in this significant

portion, through its picturesque and dramatic simplicity: —

"'Nor can she ever forget, nor will old Time ever erase the horrors of the midnight Cry preceeding the Bloody Massacre at Lexington, when we were roused from the benign slumbers of the season, by beat of drum & ringing of Bell, with the dire alarm That a thousand of the Troops of George the third were gone forth to murder the peaceful inhabitants of the surrounding villages. A few hours with the dawning day Convinced us the bloody purpose was executing. The platoon firing assuring us the rising sun must witness the Bloody Carnage. Not knowing what the event would be at Cambridge at the return of these bloody ruffians, and seeing another Brigade despatched to the Assistance of the former, Looking with the ferocity of barbarians, it seemd necessary to retire to some place of safety till the calamity wass passd. My partner had been a fortnight confind by illness. After dinner we set out not knowing whither we went, we were directed to a place calld fresh pond about a mile from the town but what a destressd house did we find there filld with women whose husbands were gone forth to meet the Assailiants, 70 or 80 of these with numbers of infant children crying and agonizing for the Fate of their husbands. In addition to this scene of distress we were for some time in sight of the Battle, the glistening instruments of death proclaiming by

an incessant fire, that much blood must be shed, that many widowd & orphand ones be left as monuments of that persecuting Barbarity of British Tyranny. Another uncomfortable night we passd some nodding in their Chairs, others resting their weary limbs on the floor. The welcome harbingers of day give notice of its dawning light but brings us news it is unsafe to return to Cambridge, as the enemy were advancing up the river & firing on the town. to stay in this place was impracticable. . . . Thus with precipitancy were we driven to the town of Andover, following some of our Acquaintances, five of us to be Conveyd with one poor tired horse & chaise. Thus we began our passage alternately walking and riding, the roads filld with frighted women & Children Some in carts with their tatterd furniture, others on foot fleeing into the woods. But what added greatly to the horror of the scene was our passing thro the Bloody field at Menotomy which was strewd with the mangled Bodies. We met one affectionate Father with a Cart looking for his murdered son & picking up his Neighbours who had fallen in Battle, in order for their Burial."

She begs Mrs. Warren to depict the "moving scene" with her "poetic pencil." But no pencil of whatever sort could work with half the effect of this graphic eye-witness.

These years brought a constant series of apprehensions even for those at home. Plym-

outh, though far from the seat of war, was not exempt from fear. In 1775, Mrs. Warren writes "Mrs. Temple Lady of Robert Temple, Esq.," that an attack is expected at Plymouth, though she feels that the comparative insignificance of the town will be its protection. But the general nervousness continues. Again she writes Mrs. Lothrop, at Fairfield, that the town had grown into a confusion of fear; but that she herself had never thought Plymouth would be one of the first points of attack to the enemy when there were a hundred places more important. Consequently, in the midst of the confusion, she had reassured her family, and, without taking the trouble to move her goods to a place of safety, as her neighbors were doing, she had set out that day to visit her husband at headquarters. Imagine the stately dame, "calm amid difficulties," continuing her household duties, and then tranquilly carrying out her plans as if the enemy were not at the door! But rumor grew so hot that even she had to concede something to prudence. She writes her husband: —

PLIMOUTH May 3 1775

Yours of the 12 instant received this morning was a Cordial to my mind though be assured my spirits are on as high a key as can be expected at a

time when so many of my fellow creatures & particularly such a number of my friends are in distress: and though you are likely to be detained longer than we expected I will console myself with the hope that you will be instrumental in the hand of providence to promote the peace the Glory & the happiness of your Country: and notwithstanding my painful apprehensions I pass my days in a considerable degree of cheerfulness & at night repose myself trusting in him who alone maketh us to dwell in safety — I awake refreshed with quiet slumbers: though greatly concerned for the safety of my dear husband: I feel a Confidence that heaven will protect & Guard his precious life that we may be prepared for all that is before us is constantly & fervently breathed from my heart. — I have written to Mr Hitchcock to take two of our sons but he declining the charge am at a loss where to apply next — I shall send a part of your property to some place of safety this week — and shall do everything in my power for the interest & safety of your family: and would not have you add to the load of your cares a too great anxiety for your wife & children. If the public service can be promoted by your making a journey to Conneticut I will not make the least objection to your going. I need not say how tedious is your absence: but the Great Lessons of self denial and resignation are what the present Generation are admonished to learn — I think it no arogance to say few men are better qualified for such an important embassy therefore

let your concern for me be no hindrance: & if it will be any inducement to you to go on this Delegation I will arrange my affairs at home so as to leave them with convenience & meet you at providence & accompany you on your journey. —

The important question you mentioned as preventing your leaving Congress yesterday leads me to offer my thoughts on the perplexed state of affairs — I think such a question should not be agitated untill you have a new Choice of Delegates — if anything of that nature is done it ought to be in full assembly — in an assembly of men of judgment integrity & fortune — for nothing permanent or that will give general satisfaction can be done with regard to that matter unless there are a considerable number of men of property to give consequence to the measure. men of this description ought not to sit still at home when every thing is afloat — do you not think as Congress has been weakened by calling of several of its active members to other departments it would be best to supply their places by a speedy appointment of fresh hands — for if by a little too much precipitation in so great an affair — or if by making an effort when you have not sufficient strength to carry it through: and the movement should thereby prove unsuccessful it would have been better never to have attempted it — but believe all will agree that it ought to be postponed no longer than the thirty first instant. —

I am not about to obtrude my opinion or advice,

am sensible my judgment is too weak: yet considering the difficult & perplexed state of affairs I think every one who is capable of any reflection should divulge their sentiments: which may be rejected if purile & indigested: or improved to advantage if they contain any hint that can contribute to general utility. —

Your son Winslow the bearer of this has so great a desire to see the American army that I thought proper to consent: as I supposed it would have no Ill Effect upon his millitary disposition but would have him return as soon as possible — by your son you will let me know if I must engage the house at taunton as it is likely to be taken up by the inhabitants of Boston — Your advice in every step is requested by your

affectionate M WARREN

since the above have heard a number
of Marines are landed at Boston and
a formidable body of British troops near
at hand —

There is something in that agitated postscript which, even after so many days, is calculated to stir the blood. Not so did Mrs. Warren write in her moments of ease!

Four days later her husband writes John Adams from Watertown: —

"After I had Executed my Commission at Providence I returned Home set Mrs. Warren down in

her own habitation, made the last provision I could for the security of our Family and some of our Effects which we Considered to be not very safe at Plymouth. & I Immediately hastened to this place in order to Contribute my mite to the publick service in this Exigence of affairs. . . . I could for myself wish to see your Friends Washington & Lee at the Head of it [the army] & yet dare not propose it though I have it in Contemplation."

But though Mrs. Warren was more tranquil in the circumstances of her life than certain other women of the time, she suffered much from loneliness.

"I shall soon be impatient to hear from you," she writes her husband, "and more so to see you —remind our friends to write often. Tell Dr. Winthrop I long to be at their social fire side listening to the delightful Voice of real friendship and the language of philosophy."

Her husband was often with the Winthrops; for they lived at Cambridge, whither his duties led him.

The moment never comes when he can leave Madame Mercy for a stay at Watertown or Cambridge without taking her heart with him. In his absence she is desolate indeed. On December 11, 1775, she writes Mrs. Adams:

"You have sisters at Hand & Many Agreeable friends around you which I have not. I have not seen a friend of an afternoon Nor spent one abroad Except once or twice I Rode out since I came from Braintree."

Mrs. Adams occasionally visits her at Plymouth; but there is always a longer or shorter stop at Braintree when Mrs. Warren goes to Watertown for a stay with her husband. The two stop over, if not for a visit, for a friendly call, and then there is warm exchange, not only of sentiments, but the tragic knowledge of the times. July 14, 1775, Mrs. Warren writes her Portia relative to a little visit which she has just made at Braintree, and she wonders how it could have been so tranquil in the midst of war and alarm. (They were getting the habit of daily misfortune, these patriots!) But the conclusion is the thing, — pregnant betrayal of her ever-present impatience under inaction. "Everything is Hostile," she says, "*yet Nothing Vigorous.*" She would have had her country's enemies slain and buried without undue discrimination. That entire year was a grievous one, full of alarms and confusion, even with the drawback of "nothing vigorous." Mrs. Warren did not always find Plymouth a peaceful resort when she unwillingly left her "friend"

and returned to her lonely "habitation." She writes thence, September 11, 1775: —

"I arrived in safety at my own Habitation & found my family in Health though sickness rages around us and Death has been knocking at the doors of my Nearest Neighbours. The uncommon Mortality which everywhere prevails is a Dark frown of Heaven upon the Land."

Mrs. Warren was said by her contemporaries to have been a mistress of social grace, and especially of the elusive charm of conversation. A eulogy of the time thus bears testimony: —

"Her talents as a writer were exceeded by her powers of conversation. In the charms and graces of this amiable art she was surpassed by none. Grave or playful, serious or facetious, as the subject or the occasion required; imposing restraint only upon indecorum, and inspiring modest merit with confidence; copious in expression, complacent in manner, clear in argument, uniform in elegance, varying in grace, and never forgetful of the dignity of her sex and character, she charmed or beguiled into silence and approbation, those whom she failed to persuade or convince."

Yet with so many incentives to the delights of a social life, she seemed to be little interested in the amusements in Watertown; but

that is only because she cared so passionately for the society of her "friend." Moreover, the times were too grave for much social beguilement. No woman could give her mind to gayety while Rome was burning. Grave speculations occupied her time; real dangers confronted her. She had to wonder how she might chance to feel when, as was eminently probable, she might be driven into the woods by the remorseless Britons. Mrs. Adams agrees with her in a disinclination for diversion. She implores her to write very often "whilst you tarry at Watertown." She adds: —

"I fear I shall not see you at Watertown. I feel but little inclination to go into company — I have no son big enough to accompany me, and two women cannot make out so well as when they are more naturally coupled. I do not fancy riding through roxbury with only a female partner. So believe you will not see Your Portia."

These two women not only compare their sentiments of unshaken trust in the good that is "the final goal of ill," and their belief in the validity of resistance, but they occasionally look danger in the face and with unshaken nerve set down "his form and pressure." January 28, 1775, Mrs. Warren

writes that she perceives from her friend's last letter the apprehensions under which she is suffering. She owns their validity: —

"I am very sensible with you my dear M^rs^ Adams that by our Happy Connection with partners of Distinguishd Zeal integrity & Virtue, who would be Marked out as Early Victims to successful Tyranny, we should thereby be subjected to peculiar afflictions, but yet we shall never wish them to do anything for our sakes Repugnant to Honour or Conscience but though we may . . . be willing to suffer pain & poverty with them, Rather than they should deviate from their Noble Principles of Integrity & Honour, yet where would be our Constancy & Fortitude Without Their assistence to support the Wounded Mind. And Which of us should have the Courage of an Aria or A Portia in A Day of trial like theirs. for myself I dare not Boast and pray Heaven that Neither M^r^ Adams nor my friend may be Ever Called to such a Dreadful proof of Magnanimity. I do not mean to die by our own hand Rather than submit to the yoke of Servitude & survive the Companions of our Hearts, nor do I think it would have been the Case with either of those Celebrated Ladies had they lived in the Days of Christianity. for I think it is much greater proof of an Heroic soul to struggle with the Calamities of life and patiently Resign ourselves to the Evils we Cannot avoid than cowardly to shrink from the post alloted us by the

great Director of the Theatre of the Universe Before we have finished our part in the Drama of life."

These fears are destined to walk with her throughout the struggle. On February 27, 1774, she writes: —

" . . . Shall I own to you that the Woman & the Mother daily arouse my fears & fill my Heart with anxious Concern for the decission of the Mighty Controversy between Great Britain & the Colonies. for if the sword must finally terminate the dispute besides the feelings of Humanity for the Complicated distress of the Community, no one has at stake a Larger share of Domestic Felicity than myself. for not to mention my fears for him with whom I am most tenderly connected: Methinks I see no less than five sons who must buckle on the Harness and perhaps fall a sacrifice."

But she reiterates her determination to utter no complaint; she will leave it "in his Hand who wills the universal Happiness of his Creatures."

Her vivid imagination was, as her husband rallyingly declared, an enemy that lived always within her gates. Yet her dark apprehensions were supported by all the probabilities of the hour. "But oh!" she writes, October 15, 1776, "the Dread of Loosing all that

this World can Bestow by one Costly sacrifice keeps my Mind in Continual Alarm." In the fear of loss, she died daily. The realization of what her costly sacrifice might be constituted the actual sacrifice of the moment.

But though Abigail Adams, absorbed in agricultural and domestic problems, had no heart for any social circle from which her husband must be absent, she was not averse to news from the centres of social life. She besieges Mrs. Warren for portraits of those whom she meets while at her husband's side, — portraits of the officers' ladies, portraits of the officers themselves. For James Warren was on friendly and intimate terms with all the notabilities of Cambridge, and his wife had ample facilities for character drawing. I love to see her take her pen in hand, and sit down to the task with a well-satisfied sigh, warmly interested in human creatures, and modestly conscious of being able to hit them off! Here is a sample of her skill: —

WATERTOWN April 17, 1776

If my dear friend Required only a very Long Letter to make it agreeable I Could easily gratify her but I know there must be many more Requisites to make it pleasing to her taste. if you Measure by Lines I Can at once Comply, if by

sentiment I fear I shall fall short. but as Curiosity seems to be awake with Regard to the Company I keep & the Manner of spending my time I will endeavour to gratify you. I arrived at my Lodgings before Dinner the day I Left you, found an obliging family Convenient Room & in the Main an agreable set of Lodgers. Next Morning I took a Ride to Cambridge and waited on M^rs^ Washington at 11 o clock where I was Received with the politeness & Respect shown in a first interview among the well bred & with the Ease & Cordiallity of friendship of a much Earlier date. if you wish to hear more of this Ladys Character I will tell you I think the Complacency of her Manners speaks at once the Benevolence of her Heart & her affability Candor & Gentleness quallify her to soften the hours of private Life or to sweeten the Cares of the Hero & smooth the Rugged scenes of War. I did not dine with her though much urg'd but Engaged to spend the ensuing day at headquarters. She desired me to Name an early hour in the Morning when she would send her Chariot and Accompany me to see the Deserted Lines of the enemy and the Ruins of Charleston. A Melancholy sight the Last which Evinces the Barbaraty of the foe & leaves a Deep impression of the suffering of that unhappy town. M^r^ Custice is the only son of the Lady [I] Have Discribed, a sensible Modest agreeable young Man. His Lady a Daughter of Coll Calvert of Mariland, appears to be of an Engaging Disposition but of so

Extremely Delicate a Constitution, that it Deprives her as well as her friends of part of the pleasure which I am persuaded would Result from her Conversation did she enjoy a greater Share of Health. She is pretty, genteel Easy & Agreable, but a kind of Languor about her prevents her being so sociable as some Ladies, yet it is evident it is not owing to that want of Vivacity which renders youth agreable, but to a want of health which a Little Clouds her spirits.

But there was one enemy of the time which was sufficiently grewsome, and yet, from a social aspect, so amusing that it deserves consideration. This was the small-pox. It was no new visitor, nor was the remedy of inoculation new. The disease was in evidence early and late, and in 1721 it had laid Boston waste. At that time inoculation had been introduced into England, despite great opposition, by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. She had begun the crusade by operating on her little daughter, and Dr. Zabdiel Boylston, of Boston, had the same courage of conviction. He inoculated his own son, a child of six, a proceeding which was thought little short of murderous. But Cotton Mather stood loyally by him; he even invited the physicians to meet for consultation, "that whoever first begins this practice may have the concurrence

of his worthy brethren to fortify him." But the physicians were wary even of this godly divine, and Dr. Boylston went on his lonely way, still inoculating. Out of the two hundred and eighty-six persons operated on but six died, and of the five thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine not inoculated, eight hundred and forty-four died. This was sufficiently hard for the growth of the town thus early in its history; but in 1776, when even a slight impulse was sufficient to distract the public mind, the reappearance of the disease proved to be no small matter. But, as its previous visits had shown, the social side of the case was full of humor. Hospitals for inoculation were established, and patients compared notes with avidity. The hospitals were no new thing, nor was the social complexion of the occasion. Mrs. Earle quotes a letter from a Boston merchant to Colonel Wentworth, in 1775: —

"'Mr. Storer has invited Mrs. Martin to take the small-pox in her house; if Mrs. Wentworth desires to get rid of her fears in the same way we will accommodate her in the best way we can. I've several friends that I've invited, and none of them will be more welcome than Mrs. Wentworth.'

"These brave classes took their various puri-

fying and sudorific medicines in cheerful concert, were 'grafted' together, 'broke out' together, were feverish together, sweat together, scaled off together, and convalesced together."

Hannah Winthrop writes to Mrs. Warren: —

"The reigning subject is the Small Pox. Boston has given up its Fears of an invasion & is busily employd in Communicating the Infection. Straw Beds & Cribs are daily Carted into the Town. That ever prevailing Passion of following the Fashion is as predominent at this time as ever. Men Women & children eagerly crowding to innoculate is I think as modish as running away from the Troops of a barbarous George was the last year."

The local letters of the time are full of it. July 24, 1776, John Adams writes to James Warren: —

"This, I suppose, will find you at Boston, growing well of the Small Pox. This Distemper is the King of Terrors to America this year. We shall suffer as much by it as we did last Year by the Scarcity of Powder. And therefore I could wish, that the whole people was inoculated — it gives me great pleasure to learn that such numbers have removed to Boston, for the sake of going through it, and that Innoculation is permitted in every town.

"I rejoice at the spread of the Small Pox, on another account, having had the Small Pox, was the merit, which originally, recommended me to this lofty Station. This Merit is now likely to be common enough, & I shall stand a Chance to be relieved. Let some others come here and see the Beauties and Sublimities of a Continental Congress. — I will stay no longer. — A Ride to Philadelphia, after the Small Pox, will contribute prodigiously to the Restoration of your Health."

On August 17, he writes: "I had a letter from you by the Post yesterday. congratulate you and your other self, on your happy Passage, through the Small Pox."

Enter now an old Tory friend of ours to enliven the situation. This reminiscence, in the words of John Adams, is relative to his own previous experience: —

"After having been ten or eleven days inoculated, I lay lolling on my bed in Major Cunningham's chamber under the tree of liberty, with half a dozen young fellows as lazy as myself, all waiting and wishing for symptoms and eruptions; all of a sudden appeared at the chamber door the reverend Doctor [Mather Byles] with his rosy face, many-curled wig, and pontifical air and gait. 'I have been thinking,' says he, 'that the clergy of this town ought upon this occasion to adopt the benediction of the Romish clergy, and, when we

enter the apartment of the sick, to say in the foreign pronouncation *Pax tecum!*' These words are pronounced by foreigners, as the Dr. pronounced them, 'Pox take 'em.'"

Here is another picture of the time, written by James Warren to John Adams: —

BOSTON July 17 1776

MY DEAR SIR, — When you are Informed that in the variety of Changes that have taken place in this Town it is now become a great Hospital for Inoculation you will wonder to see a Letter from me dated here. but so it is that the rage for Inoculation prevailing here has whirled me into its vortex & brought me with my *other self* into the Crowd of Patients with which this Town is now filled. here is a collection of Good, Bad, & Indifferent of all Orders, Sexes, Ages & Conditions, your good Lady & Family among the first. she will give you (I presume) such an acc^{t} of herself &c as makes it unnecessary for me to say more on that head. She will perhaps tell you that this is the reigning subject of conversation, & that even Politics might have been suspended for a Time if your Declaration of Independence & some other political Movements of yours had not reached us. the Declaration came on Saturday & diffused a general Joy. Every one of us feels more Important than ever. we now congratulate each other as Freemen. it has really raised our Spirits to a Tone Beneficial to mitigate the Malignancy of the Small Pox, &

what is of more consequence seems to animate and inspire every one to support & defend the Independency he feels. I shall Congratulate you on the Occasion & so leave this subject, & go to one not quite so agreeable. Congress have acted a part with regard to this Colony, shall I say cunning or Politic, or only Curious, or is it the Effect of Agitation. has the approach of Lord Howe had such an effect on the Southern Colonies that they have forgot the very Extensive Sea Coast we have to defend, the Armed Vessels we have to Man from South Carolina to the Northern Limits of the United Colonies, that a large part of the Continental Army is made up from this Colony, that the General has not only got our Men but our Arms & that they within two months ordered a reinforcement of three Battalions to the five already here. Lucky for us you did not give time to raise these before your other requisitions reached us, or we should have been striped indeed. dont the Southern Colonies think this worth defending, or do they think with half our men gone the remainder can defend it with Spears & darts, or with Slings (as David slew Goliah). I was surprised to find the Whole five Battalions called away. no determination is yet taken how their places shall be supplyed. . . . I cant describe the Alteration & the Gloomy appearance of this Town. No Business, no Busy horses but those of the Physicians. Ruins of Buildings, wharfs &c &c wherever you go, & the streets covered with Grass.

Here appears the domestic atmosphere of the question, set forth in a letter from Mercy Warren to her husband: —

PLIMOUTH 25 Nov 1776.

The letter my dear Mr. Warren will receive to-morrow I almost wish I had not wrote. I own I was a litle too Low spirited, but my mind was oppressed & I wanted to unbosom. it is this evening no less free from care though I feel a little Differently. I was ready to think the task of Governing & Regulating my Children alone almost too much — I now am forced to strive hard to keep out the Gloomy apprehension that the Burden may soon be lessened in some painful way. I have been this afternoon at the hospital where I left your three youngest sons. Poor Children — it was not possible to make them willing to give up the project. they thought it a mighty priviledge to be innoculated. I wish nor they nor we may have Reason to Regret it — but I cannot feel quite at Ease — I Want to Discourage Winslow from going in yet am afraid. Their accomodations are not altogether to my liking nor are their Nurses sufficient but they talk of getting more & better — but if my dear Children should be very ill I must go & take Charge of them myself Inconvenient as it is — 48 persons were innoculated this afternoon & near as many will offer to-morrow. I think it is too many for one Class. But there they are — & it is as easy for the Great phisition of soul

& Body to Lend Healing Mercy to the Multitude as to the Few, and if He Brings them Back in safty to their several Habitations I hope we shall Adore the Hand that Heals, and give Glory to the Rock of our salvation.

Wensday 24 of Nov. Your house Looks Lonely and Deserted in a manner you can hardly conceive — but three or four weeks will soon run away & if my family should then be Returned in safty to my own Roof I shall be thankful Indeed.

They were returned "in safty," and perhaps nothing shows so truly the anxiety their mother had suffered as the havoc thereby wrought in her spelling. The "Great phisition" had not been trusted in vain.

VI

EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

AMERICAN literary history does not begin in America. Back to the first clear fount it goes, to Piers the Plowman and the ferlies of Malvern Hills, to Chaucer's spring song set to the rippling accompaniment of leaves, and, still nearer the moment of its individual being, to the splendid creative energy of the Elizabethan period. The literary achievement which, in England, immediately preceded our written word, was beautifully at one with these. It held the lofty plane of being where art is not to be judged as form alone, but as the appropriate garment of life itself. Let it be remembered that John Smith sent home his vital word relative to the New World only eight years before Shakespeare died, and that at the moment Spenser and Sidney were young in the memory. The time was just declining from that great height of glorious action when life looked infinitely precious in possibilities, and the

world was a football for any eager soul. The riches of being seemed then unplumbed; the possibilities of thought and action were unfettered. Men were sane, robust, enamored of colossal deeds, and so in love with life that they read her inner soul and created her twin sister, the drama, through a careless retrospect of what they and their fellows had enjoyed and suffered.

Then followed, parallel with our Colonial infancy, that incredible period of perfect lyric expression, when every man could strike a blow and sing a song. Even the soldier told his love in phrases we scarce dare touch to-day, though with a finger-tip of praise, so precious have they grown in lone perfection. These were but gauds of time to Pilgrim and Puritan, wilfully deaf to beautiful achievement; but even they could not fail to be affected by the strenuous vitality of a spring which brought such buds to flower. While our forefathers meditated upon the exact complexion of a future state, there were men who lived gayly in contempt of death, their only petition (carolled lustily, as though Tristram of Brittany led the stave),

> "A short life in the saddle, Lord!
> Not long life by the fire!"

Never was a greater contrast; but those stern forbears of ours, who had been so justly stirred to bitter reaction, could not escape the benison of the art life they despised. In some sweet corners of England the lyric world was at the morn; its light was meant to grow and spread. Again there was the crowding of deeds. No more such broidered pageants as when men went sailing over sea, to return with dusky natives, gems of price, and tales more precious yet of savage land and open treasure, — not these, but the civil upheaval of a nation. And so the great historic and literary spirit of the time passed on into the next century, with its artificial restraints, but brightened by the essay and the robust beginnings of the novel.

The seriousness and the amount of Mercy Warren's work entitle her to a place in local literary history; and, indeed, weighed with her contemporaries, she was of no small importance. Therefore she can only be justly estimated with reference to her background and environment; and especially, although the literary pulse beat intermittently from Massachusetts to Virginia, with reference to her own immediate surroundings, the mental life of New England. To weigh the causes which must have formed her intellectual

activity, it is necessary to look beyond her own life and work, back to the childhood of the book as it grew in America.

Here, as ever at that period, you come at once upon Old England regnant over the New. The first book-makers among us — John Smith, Bradford, Winthrop, Winslow — were born in the mother-country. They were English to the bone, though, once under these brighter skies, their outlook changed and their expression became swiftly modified by soil and climate and dramatic conditions which were absolutely strange. It was no mere romantic phrasing which named ours the New World. This was not only an unfamiliar land, but a land untouched, unspoiled. In the merely picturesque, it must have appealed almost with passion to natures sprung from that mellowed soil where traditions have been overspread like fine inscriptions on priceless manuscripts. The almost limitless spaces, the floods of crystal air untainted by a breath, the solitudes shared only with wild things or men as wild, the deep wood recesses where any tree might seem some hoary eremite (in that among such myriads it might never yet, in all its growth, have caught the eye of man). This was the new scene, the God-given and God-governed theatre of action.

To take up life so illuminated and inspired was to stand forth another man in the first Eden. Even to us who, in going abroad, leave civilized conditions for others more civilized yet, a foreign shore is strangely thrilling; it caresses the mind and the eye as well. We are awakened to an ecstasy hitherto unknown. We renew an infancy of joy in the foretaste of experiences absolutely untried. If travel be thus for us, pilgrims of the commonplace, what must it have been to men who made the journey hither the great culminating act of their lives, the leap into an unknown less tangible to them than that other far country of death! And having once set foot on their chartered land, day by day offered a bewildering drama, strenuous enough to start even the ice-locked torrent of the Puritan nature.

Even their warfare was dramatic. Torn from a battlefield where the enemy had been moral and spiritual, and where, if they fell on death, it was according to the civilized rules of the game, here they must grapple with the possibility of ambush, torture, or hideous massacre. Their foes were colossal, formless, like monsters in the dark,— savage nature, starvation, cold, and plague. Day by day, like a monotonous drone and burden,

went on the sordid cares of household life. Yet informing every trial was the exhilarating certainty of freedom of soul and action (save for Baptists, Quakers, and such small deer!), an abiding consciousness of actual birth into another star.

From such an overplus of life there could not fail to be great results, though action swept on very swiftly and gave impressions little time to fructify and bloom again in the perfect forms of art. With the moral and actual call to arms sounding about them on every side, it was impossible for the colonists to pause between great blows and set down words according to accepted canons. The deed came first. The word, as it ever should be, followed, her attendant minister. Perhaps the most notable exception during that period of earnest being was George Sandys, who, in the midst of bleak conditions, kept his hand ever upon the pulse of living antiquity, and made his translation of Ovid the noble purpose of a devoted life. Thus arose in the wilderness the voice of Latin poetry, a fine, pure note, preluding, let us hope, the reverence of the New World for the general motherhood of literature. Thus, perhaps, was laid the foundation of our house of art.

Moreover, not only did utility hold every

inch of ground against the patient goddess, Beauty, but for the latter the Puritans, through the very limitations of their nature, had absolutely no use. This, said they, is a dying world,— crass expression of an antique philosophy, so savagely shot forth that it wounded where it fell, themselves most of all. They sought an abiding kingdom, and with a sad and childlike logic they bound infinity with their own interpretation of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." They classified beauty among the unrealities of life, and, with a boastfully passionate renunciation, swore fealty to truth. But the Spirit of Beauty is not to be offended. She has the patience of God. Give her a sand-heap, and she will bring forth a flower there. She still abode with them in the wilderness, like the rejected mistress of the olden tales, who, in page's garments, follows her love, and ministers to him whether he will or no.

And so, throughout the unconscious expression of their hot living come slight glimpses of the divine, the imperishable. To return to that first page of American literature is to find it significant: John Smith's True Relation of Virginia, trenchant, curt, a soldier's letter, the sword-thrust of a man of action, the braggadocio of a fighter and swashbuck-

ler, full of snorting defiance for the gentlemen of England "who sit at home at ease" and teach their betters how to weather a gale. It breathes the freedom of speech incident to the New World ; that swaggering egoism caught, perhaps, from intoxicating winds and great bright spaces and grown now into a national vice. It was personal as well as epistolary; and so, in the main, were all the beginnings of the book among us.

For these men who first set pen to paper had a homespun desire to enlighten stay-at-homes as to the exigencies of the new life, to coax recruits, and to justify themselves for coming. There were at their very doors wonders whereof even Elizabethan England, sweeping the heaven with such an eye as has never yet regarded it, of which even she saw nothing. The Indians were a never-failing source of curiosity to our cousins over sea. The hardships of life in the wilderness were, in their eyes, dramatic as the doings of the Children of Israel. Not an exile among our fathers but knew this, and would fain send home some Relation, some News from New England, or discursive tale of a colony. Moreover, John Smith was not the only man to be suspected of drawing the longbow. The learned Josselyn, forerunner of our naturalists

and observers, told some strange tales out of the school of open air, — of frogs "as big as a child of a year old," or the monstrous Pilhannaw who "aeries in the woods upon the high hills of Ossapy." The Pilhannaw may be as unsubstantial as the bread-and-butter fly, but her creation is worth while, if only that it might give birth to a sentence so alluring in remote, sweet sound.

From Winslow and Bradford, fathers of American history, through the ponderous annals of Cotton Mather, our early writing was a chronicle of events; and, like the civil polity of the day, its very form was based upon religion. The fountain-head of inspiration was ever the Bible. A man might know the tongues and quote them fluently, but the source of life was Hebraic. To realize this simple dependence on the literal interpretation of Scripture, and to realize the hold it had, it is only necessary to turn to matters political; and I know of no more pregnant instance than one connected with John Winthrop's public life, where he considers the project of furnishing aid to La Tour in his Canadian warfare, and gravely bases his argument, not on political expediency, but on the one point whether La Tour is to be considered "a neighbor." For if he be a neighbor, then the

Scriptures command that he shall receive help in time of need.

Throughout these vivid beginnings, however, there is no slightest hint of intentional fine writing. The first chroniclers aim only at plain fact, but, in spite of them, it is garnished with aspiration, touched here and there by some sudden, thrilling beauty of phrase, or lighted sparsely with rays of a naïve, unconscious humor. Sometimes they rise to a height unattainable by us who do not speak from the altitude of such spiritual desire; their words become Miltonic. There is a dignified simplicity in their touch which transcends elaborate description. Young tells of "a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men." Could word be stronger, and at the same time less intentionally challenging? But if one might choose a representative paragraph out of abundant beauty, let him take Bradford's description of the Pilgrims departing from Holland: —

"And y^{e} time being come that they must departe, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of y^{e} citie, unto a towne sundrie miles of called Delfes-Haven, wher the ship lay ready to receive them. So they left y^{t} goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place near 12 years; but they knew they were pilgrimes, & looked

not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to y^e^ heavens, their dearest cuntrie, and quieted their spirits. When they came to y^e^ place they found y^e^ ship and all things ready; and shuch of their freinds as could not come with them followed after them, and sundrie also came from Amsterdame to see them shipte and to take their leave of them. That night was spent with litle sleep by y^e^ most, but with freindly entertainmente & christian discourse and other reall expressions of true christian love. The next day, the wind being faire, they wente aborde, and their freinds with them, where truly dolfull was y^e^ sight of that sade and mournfull parting; to see what sighs and sobbs and praires did sound amongst them, what tears did gush from every eye, & pithy speeches peirst each harte; that sundry of y^e^ Dutch strangers y^t^ stood on y^e^ key as spectators, could not refraine from tears. Yet comfortable & sweete it was to see shuch lively and true expressions of dear & unfained love. But y^e^ tide (which stays for no man) caling them away y^t^ were thus loath to departe, their Reṽē^d^: pastor falling downe on his knees, (and they all with him,) with watrie cheeks cōmended them with most fervente praiers to the Lord and his blessing. And then with mutuall imbrases and many tears, they tooke their leaves one of an other; which proved to be y^e^ last leave to many of them."

This has the dolor, not so much of Scripture, as of some simple tale of "old, far-off, forgot-

ten things," perhaps like Malory's parting between Launcelot and Guenever.

Nor was there dearth of simple humanity, whether you take that very humorous gentleman, the Cobbler of Agawam, or the sweet-natured Sewall, with his sober sanity, his predilection for widows, his inspection of the family coffins (with the after-comment, "'T was an awful yet pleasing treat"), his ingenuous tribute to the tooth which dropped out in meeting, and his mental quickening in those first days when "the swallows unanimously and cheerfully proclaimed the spring." No eye roving through the byways of American literature could possibly slip past this sweet soul without loving communion, no matter how eagerly one would get on "to Hecuba."

Until England's fortunate obtuseness to her own interests and our needs, America was simply a collection of Colonies differing amazingly in forms of speech, habit of thought, and social customs. The settlers were unlike in nationality and religion. They represented different classes of society, with their various traditions, beliefs, and prejudices; and seizing a foothold on a continent where even climate itself is sufficiently unstable to vary a common type, they crystallized into isolated communities having only a family likeness. Had not

the fortunate blow of the Stamp Act come at the significant moment, to jar us into unity and coherence, we should have been a polyglot nation. All the low mutterings of revolt along the horizon culminated then in flash and peal, significant as a tocsin calling the people to arms. From that instant every mind was bent upon identical issues, and from that instant began a national life, and, inseparable from it, a national literature. Then a splendid vitality went into speech and pamphlet, of a nature to overtop the more labored efforts of any piping time of peace. This was the day of undying phrase, struck out in the heat of argument, or born in the night-watches, when every man thought prayerfully, worshipfully, of that great possibility, the scope of which he knew not as yet, but which was destined to be his country and the country of us all. Here again, as in Elizabethan England, was a time when deeds were linked indissolubly to high expression; as, in later days, our own Grant could indite his simple style with soldier pen, and Lincoln, a plain man, who yet knew the issues of life and death, could make immortal phrases because he served immortal issues. Through the entire course of Colonial disaffection, from the first petition to the culminating Declaration

of Independence, there was the same pertinence of phrase.

The estimate of the time is best summed up in the words of Chatham, one among our champions in Great Britain who saw us justly. In 1775, he thus addressed the House of Lords: —

"When your lordships look at the papers transmitted us from America, when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must avow that in all my reading — and I have read Thucydides and have studied and admired the master-states of the world — for solidity of reason, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under a complication of difficult circumstances, no body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia."

And with all these men who slowly attained unto vigorous expression, what contributed to their mental life? What was the stimulus strong enough to make a woman like Mercy Warren the equal of statesmen who had ten times her advantages? Though the atmosphere of art was absolutely lacking in this early life of New England, there had been, from the first, a sustained intellectual activity. The wise builders of our nation had shown their just estimate of values by making

church and college the complement of material and industrial life. No sooner were they settled than they erected a meeting-house, and there were held weekly services which had more than a sacred significance. They were austere mental exercises. The minister was the epitome of general culture. He stood forth not only the *savant* of the skies, capable of mapping out the scheme of heaven and hell, but he was an intellectual gymnast, crammed with book-learning, skilful in argument, a master of long-winded discourse. When it came to scholarship, those old divines were sometimes tremendous, as tough in the mental sinews of attack as their congregation in receptivity and endurance. The intellectual exercise of the week lay in following their polemics, calculated either to turn men into maniacs or thinkers. The hair-splitting discussions of mediæval schoolmen could scarcely have been more interminable or dreary; nor, let it be said, more conducive to that habit of mental attention which has such disciplinary use.

Before 1765, seven colleges had been established, Harvard first of all, in 1636. And so were letters kept alive as truly as in the Dark Ages of Europe by monastic and university life. Isolated as were the Colonial centres in

the days before national calamity brought about national union, the colleges contributed toward a common life, a common understanding. For a young man might attend a college not at his very door, and thus find himself shorn of sectional prejudices and broadened by knowledge of customs unlike his own. But best of all, the fire of learning was kept alive and burning brightly there. Training in the classics was something extraordinary for severity and perfection. One significant change came with the birth of the new nation, — a change in social atmosphere. For whereas, previous to the class which was graduated in 1773, the names on the Harvard catalogue were arranged according to social precedence, after that moment, when all men were about to assert themselves free and equal, the lists were made alphabetical.

The new America had also her newspapers, the earliest one that lived to grow up being the Boston "News Letter," of 1704. Then there were almanacs, even before Poor Richard's, and a flood after him, — little commonplace books, full of predictions, observations, and counsel, destined to fill a large share in the dull hours of the house-bound; and as to their margins, excellent for the writing of verse. The Rev. John Cotton, who put his almanac

to that use, was not the only sober New Englander who dropped into poetry. It was a vice — and a saving virtue — of the time. Nothing save cloistered life was ever more austere, more rigid, than this of New England. To ignore beauty, to preserve an intense self-scrutiny, to hunt sins to their lair till they turned and rent their pursuers, — this was a large part of the sombre duty of the day. Sin gave them a great deal of trouble. One almost feels that the sinner, in irritated despite, was harried into it. Even William Bradford wrote of wrong-doers: —

"An other reason may be [for sin] that it may be in this case as it is with waters when their streames are stopped or damed up, when they gett passage they flow with more violence, and make more noys and disturbance, than when they are suffered to run quietly in their owne chanels. So wikednes being here more stopped by strict laws, and ye same more nerly looked into, so as it cannot rune in a common road of liberty as it would, and is inclined, it searches everywher, and at last breaks out wher it getts vent."

In such an atmosphere of unnatural repression there must have been more than a slight satisfaction in the outlet of verse. It eased the heart. It fed some sense of the great craving for art in a rhythm and melody

however faulty. Some of it is sufficiently bad, but even the worst has a pathos all its own; it is a childlike striving for expression. The most serious of men broke forth, too, into anagrams. They wrote them on every occasion, notably for funerals, when they must have added a horror to death.

Thus, sometimes weak and striving for breath, and again drawing deep draughts of exultant power and shouting aloud on the hilltops, literature kept herself alive; and when Mercy Warren took up the pen, there were appreciative ears, and hands ready to applaud.

VII

LITERARY WORK

MERCY WARREN belonged to that more advanced period of literary activity when effort was not altogether tentative. Vague or rough as it might be, she had a background, though she was not to prove herself eminently superior to it. Her work was by no means the outcome of that welling impulse we are accustomed to call inspiration, but the product of an intellectual and moral activity which might easily have been otherwise expressed.

In her handling of public affairs, she had all the true woman's scorn of expediency and intolerance of any action short of taking the bull by the horns. Thus, seizing the medium of verse, she gave free play to her powers of reflection and satire; and, with Mrs. Warren, what her "heart thinks" her "tongue speaks." For her there was never a middle course. Life, and even political life, was right or wrong. There were moral blacks and whites; there were no grays. Tell-tale evidence lies in a cer-

tain reminiscence of hers called forth by John Adams. December 16, 1778, she writes him, reminding him that six years before he had said by the Plymouth fireside, in a moment of despondency, that "the dispute between Great Britain and America would not be settled untill your sons and my sons were able to visit and negociate with the different European courts. A Lady replied (though perhaps not from prescience but from presentiment or presumption) that you must do it yourselves — that the work must be done immediately."

If the patriots who, at Plymouth, discussed the political weather, needed heartening or even a bold push into the storm, Dame Mercy was more than ready, though always in courteous deprecation lest she overstep the bounds of her feminine province. One letter written her husband in 1776 contains this pertinent extract: —

"I am very glad to hear the provincial Congress is so full — and that you are not apprehensive of immediate danger from the king's troops — yet I cannot say I am altogether so well pleased with the expression *that you are all very easy* without mentioning anything energetic that you are about to do. it appears to me there has been a hesitance full long enough and if on the whole it is thought most expedient your body should not act with more

decission and vigor would it not be most for the honour of individual Gentlemen to make some plausible excuse and retreat homeward?"

"Act, and act well," she is always virtually saying, "or keep yourself within the bounds of a dignified silence."

Again she writes, in her uncompromising worship of the strait way: —

"I much admire the letter from Dr. Franklin except his advice with regard to a sum of money sent hither from England *to Bribe the American patriots.* I by no means approve his proposal — and I am sure you dislike it as much as myself — Let their money perish with them — but let not the shadow of venality even for a moment pollute the hands of an American patriot."

This is Mrs. Warren to the life. She is very fond of talking about Roman virtues; and it would have been no vain pretence had she claimed them for herself. The ideal of liberty, as she saw it, was crystalline, pure, not to be approached save through ways as spotless. If there must be war, — and she was never one who really shrank from that issue, — it should be a holy war. She was ready to stand by and gird her very dearest for a contest from which they might never return. She thought "in blood and iron;"

and, so far as earnestness goes, thus she wrote. Her verses were passed about from hand to hand, long before publication (and, indeed, when she was not in the least sure they ever would be published), to receive no small meed of praise. Thus far in Colonial life, women had not been encouraged in the pursuit of literature. Even Governor Winthrop, writing always with malice toward none, consigned them to the limbo they had earned. He says: —

"The Governour of Hartford upon Connecticut came to Boston, and brought his wife with him (a godly young woman and of special parts) who was fallen into a sad infirmity, the loss of her understanding and reason, which had been growing upon her divers years by occasion of her giving herself wholly to reading and writing, and had written many books. Her husband, being very loving and tender of her, was loath to grieve her; but he saw his errour when it was too late. For if she had attended her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger, &c., she had kept her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honourably in the place God had set her."

Still, when a star had really risen (especially if it took good care not to depart from its

orbit; the woman poet must, like Mrs. Warren, attend also to her household minutiæ), it was hailed with acclamation. For this was a century after Anne Bradstreet had been crowned a "Tenth Muse," and flattered to a point inconceivable even to us, who set rush-lights to reign briefly in the heavens. Mercy Warren was the centre of a scarcely less astonishing influx of approbation. John Adams uses, in writing to her, a language warmer than that of the courtier to Aspasia. His "sugar upon honey and butter upon cream" are enough to lure a bird out of a bush. He writes her from Braintree, January 3, 1774: —

> Madam, — I remember that Bishop Burnet in a letter he once wrote to Lady Rachell Russell the virtuous Daughter of the great Southampton, the unfortunate wife of Lord Russell who died a Martyr to English Liberties, says, "Madam I never attempt to write to you but my pen conscious of its Inferiority falls out of my Hand" — The polite Prelate did not write to that excellent Lady in so bold a figure with half the Sincerity that I could apply it to myself when writing to Mrs. Warren.

He prays that "a double Portion of her Genius as well as Virtues [may] descend to her Posterity," refers again to her as "an

incomparable Satyrist of our Acquaintance," and goes on to say: —

"My most friendly Regards to a certain Lady, — tell her, that God Almighty, (I use a bold style) has intrusted her with Powers, for the good of the World, which in the course of his Providence he bestows upon very few of the human Race. — That instead of being a fault to use them, it would be criminal to neglect them."

Again, he writes her husband in a strain of almost delirious admiration: —

"Remember me, sir, in the most respectful manner to your good lady, whose manners, virtues, genius, and spirit will render her immortal, notwithstanding the general depravity."

Mrs. Winthrop, who was a friend of Mrs. Warren's youth, expresses the frankest admiration for her. Indeed, her attitude, like many another of this devoted band, was that of a naïve surprise that anybody could possibly be so clever. "When ever my Philomela Tunes the harp," writes Hannah Winthrop, "my soul is in raptures." She takes a journey, and prays Philomela to celebrate it in verse; and thereupon appear the lines "To Honoria, on her Journey to Dover, 1777." Abigail Adams has always a reverent respect for her friend's "intellects" and her use of language,

quite unconscious of the fact that her own letters are far more vivid and picturesque than any prose of her stately model, and, with human perversity, clinging ever to an awed admiration of that form of intelligence which can embody itself in rhyme. Moreover, she is never done with encomiums of Mrs. Warren's skill in character-drawing. In 1776, she writes: —

"I acknowledge my Thanks due to my Friend for the entertainment she so kindly afforded me in the Characters drawn in her Last Letter, and if coveting my Neighbours Goods was not prohibited by the Sacred Law I should be most certainly tempted to envy her the happy talant she possesses above the rest of her Sex, by adorning with her pen even trivial occurrances, as well as dignifying the most important. Cannot you communicate some of those Graces to your friend and suffer her to pass them upon the World for her own that she may feel a Little more upon an Equality with you?"

John Adams has no less admiration for her skill in mental portraiture. In 1776, he writes her: —

"I was charmed with three Characters drawn by a most masterly Pen, which I rec^{d} at the southward. Copeleys Pencil could not have touched off with

more exquisite Finishings, the Faces of those Gentlemen. Whether I ever answered that Letter I know not. But I hope Posterity will see it. if they do I am sure they will admire it. I think I will make a Bargain with you, to draw the Character of every new Personage I have an opportunity of knowing on Condition you will do the same. My View will be to learn the Art of penetrating into Mens Bosoms, and then the more difficult art of painting what I shall see there."

Mrs. Warren was universally supposed to have a special skill in that dangerous pastime of analyzing human nature and relegating virtues and vices to the little niches set aside for them by human intelligence. Her friends besiege her for "reflections" on the character of persons prominent in official life, and receive her conclusions with ready applause.

But that she had herself sometimes a doubt of the validity of such warfare is plain enough from her own ingenuous appeal to John Adams, January 30, 1775:—

". . . Though a Man may be greatly criminal in his Conduct towards the society in which he lives, how far sir do you think it justifiable for any individual to hold him up the Object of public Derision.

"And is it consistent with the Benevolent system of Christianity to Vilify the Delinquent when

we only wish to Ward of the fatal consequences of his Crimes. But though from the particular Circumstances of an unhappy time a Little personal Acrimony Might be justifiable in your sex, Must not the female Character suffer and will she not be suspected as Deficient in the most Amiable part thereof that Candour & Charity which ensures her both Affection & Esteem if she indulges her pen to paint in the Darkest Shades even shapes whom Vice & Venality have Rendered Contemptible ? "

He responds with a set of generalities calculated to lay her scruples to rest, but, nevertheless, assuming a dangerous infallibility : —

BRAINTREE March 15 1775

MADAM, — In requesting my opinion, Madam, concerning a Point of Casuistry, you have done me great honour, and I should think myself very happy if I could remove a Scruple from a Mind, which is so amiable that it ought not to have one upon it. — Personal Reflections, when they are artfully resorted to, in order to divert the Attention from Truth, or from Arguments, which cannot be answered, are mean and unjustifiable : but We must give up the distinction between Virtue and Vice, before we can pronounce personal Reflections, always unlawful, — Will it be said that We must not pronounce Catiline a Conspirator, and Borgia a Rascall, least we should be guilty of casting personal Reflections — ? The faithfull Historian delineates

Caracters truly, let the Censure fall where it will.— The public is so interested in public Characters, that they have a Right to know them, and it becomes the Duty of every good Citizen who happens to be acquainted with them to communicate his Knowledge. There is no other way of preventing the Mischief which may be done by ill Men; no other Method of administering the Antidote to the Poison.—

Christianity Madam, is so far from discountenancing the severest Discrimination, between the good and the bad, that it assures us of the most public & solemn one conceivable, before Angells and Men; and the Practice and Example of Prophetts, and Apostles, is sufficient to Sanctify Satyr of the Sharpest Kind.

The Truth is, Madam, that, the best Gifts are liable to the worst uses & abuses, a Talent at Satyr, is commonly mixed with the choicest Powers of Genius and it has such irrisistable Charms, in the Eyes of the World, that the extravagant Praise, it never fails to extort, is apt to produce extravagant Vanity in the Satirist, and an exuberant Fondness for more Praise, untill he looses that cool Judgment which alone can justify him.

If we look into human Nature, and run through the various classes of Life, we shall find it is really a dread of Satyr that restrains our Speeches from exorbitances, more than Laws, human, moral or divine, indeed the Efficacy of civil Punishments is derived chiefly from the same source.— . . . But

classical Satyr, such as flows so naturally & easily from the Pen of my excellent Friend, has all the Efficacy, and more, in Support of Virtue and in Discountenancing of Vice, without any of the Coarseness and Indelicacy of those other Species of Satyr, the civil and political ones. . . .

Of all the Genius's whch have yet arisen in America, there has been none, superiour to one, which now shines, in this happy, this exquisite Faculty,— indeed, altho there are many which have received more industrious Cultivation I know of none, ancient or modern, which has reached the tender the pathetic, the keen & severe, and at the same time, the soft, the sweet, the amiable and the pure in greater Perfection.

Weigh the drop of honey at the end! No wonder my lady went on satirizing. No wonder either that, in her old age, in all innocency, she dealt out to Mr. Adams himself the sauce he had prescribed for others, and "drew" his character as she honestly saw it. His was a dissertation which he may have been ironically amused to remember when his own turn came. But she did nothing wantonly and in unconsidered haste. These were no random shots sped in feminine light-mindedness or malice. They were missiles of warfare in a righteous cause. She was among the skirmishers who supplement

the regular troops, and she primed her guns as carefully as they. In 1776, she wrote John Adams: —

"Do you Remember the Requests of my Last Cant you get Liberty Cannot you furnish me with the characters transactions and Views of some of the Busiest players of the political Game. I want to know a Little More of the philadelphian system, not merely from female curiosity but for another Reason which you shall know hereafter."

She wants her groundwork. She will have knowledge, and do no dishonest fighting in the dark.

Of all her work, The Group is most incisive, most earnest, and was probably widest-reaching in its influence. It was evidently sent to her husband as the various scenes were completed, and proudly submitted by him to his associates under seal of confidence. But the secret was an open one. Mrs. Warren's name needed no mention; no intellect was so poor as not to guess out the "incomparable satyrist." James Warren lost no time in communicating it to John Adams. January 15, 1775, he writes him: —

"Inclosed are for your amusement two Acts of a dramatic performance composed at my particular desire. they go to you as they came out of the

hand of the Copier, without pointing or marking. If you think it worth while to make any other use of them than a reading you will prepare them in that way & give them such other Corrections & Amendments as your good Judgment shall suggest."

But the secret is too open, and a month later the following letter was written: —

"A certain Lady of your Acquaintance is much Concerned at hearing it is reported that she wrote the Group. Parson Howe told a large Company at Table that she was the Author of it. if this was true how came he by his information. would a certain friend of ours have so little discretion as to Communicate such a matter to his parson if he knew & much less if he only Conjectured it. do speak to him about it. if he has set his parson a prating he ought to stop him."

There was soon popular call for the composition, and on May 21, 1775, John Adams writes James Warren from Philadelphia: —

"One half the Group is printed here, from a Copy printed in Jamaica. Pray send me a printed Copy of the whole & it will be greedily reprinted here. my friendship to the Author of it."

The Group is a boldly satirical piece of work, which we are forced to consider a farce

because the titlepage bids us. The inscription at the start sets forth its scope and intention: "As the great business of the polite world is the eager pursuit of amusement, and as the Public diversions of the season have been interrupted by the hostile parade in the capital; the exhibition of a new farce may not be unentertaining. THE GROUP, as lately acted, and to be re-acted to the wonder of all superior intelligences, nigh head-quarters at Amboyne."

To us, save as a literary curiosity, Mrs. Warren's farce is eminently dull; but we must not forget that its reason for existing has itself ceased to be. To an inflamed patriotism it must have been a vivid delight to find the enemies of peace held up bleeding under the eye of day, to hear some one voice the hot rancor of every heart and say what all patriots would fain have said themselves had they been clever enough. The author frankly avows her purpose at the outset, cannily prophesying that her Prologue "cannot fail of pleasing at this crisis": —

> "What! arm'd for virtue, and not point the pen.
> Brand the bold front of shameless guilty men,
> Dash the proud Gamester from his gilded car,
> Bare the mean heart which lurks beneath a star.
>
> . . . . . .

Shall I not strip the gilding off a knave,
Unplac'd, unpension'd, no man's heir or slave?
I will or perish in the gen'rous cause;
Hear this and tremble, ye who 'scape the laws."

To my mind the last four lines amply express the author and her attitude: —

"Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the world in credit to his grave;
To virtue only, and her friends, a friend,
The world beside may murmur or commend."

This was Dame Warren indeed, crystalline in purpose, uncompromising in word and judgment. Her condition of mind is only impaired by the foil of those virtues, the too rash attempt to answer the old question, "What is truth?" It is all very well to gibbet your villain; but to fulfil all the conditions of Rhadamanthine justice, be sure you prove him so. Mrs. Warren was the voice of the time, but that this was a somewhat too ruthless voice is evident in her portraiture of Governor Hutchinson: a Tory to be sure, a man faithful rather to the crown than alive to this alarming fever of Colonial revolt, and a man who, like even the patriots, thought all fair in war, and thus succeeded in rousing against himself a sort of hydrophobic madness.

Her *dramatis personæ* are the vanguard, and

begin the attack by the very significance of their names, of which Hateall, Humbug, Spendall, Mushroom, and Dupe are the more significant. The first stage direction inevitably recalls the remark of that American millionnaire who, in suggesting a statue, bid for "a female figure reflecting on the future prospects of America." Her setting is equally vague, equally ideal and emphatic; but let us not smile, for to those who read, it was easy, from the properties of a fiery imagination, to construct even from such dramatic qualities a burning scene. For, behold! the actors in this avowedly satirical production are "attended by a swarm of court sycophants, hungry harpies, and unprincipled danglers, . . . hovering over the stage in the shape of locusts, led by Massachusettensis in the form of a basilisk; the rear brought up by proteus, bearing a torch in one hand, and a powder-stalk in the other: The whole supported by a mighty army and navy, from blunder-land, for the laudible purpose of enslaving its best friends."

Never was there a more frankly partisan piece of work, showing, according to the patriotic standpoint, vice "her own image." One overmastering joy of the performance lies in the fact that out of their own mouths are the public enemies condemned. Hateall

frankly avows himself to have no purpose save murder and pillage. Others plead ambition or weakness as their excuse for espousing the Tory cause; and poisoned epithets fly about like angry hornets. The axiom that no man shall criminate himself melts into thin air. Dame Mercy, having hypnotized her enemies, forces them to drag forth their inmost minds, and own themselves either wilfully dastard, or misled by the arch-traitor — always Hutchinson — into espousing a cause manifestly evil. They are of that hopeless ilk who, knowing good, still choose the worst. Sylla voices the general concession by referring to "a brave insulted people," and cries out in a just horror of self: —

"And shall I rashly draw my guilty sword?"

The entire Group of actors are "selfish, venal men." Their mutual confessions of premeditated guilt could be no franker were they irreparably lost souls comparing crimes in hell. Her arrows stuck. Hutchinson, who had before, in certain dramatic fragments, figured as Rapatio, was thenceforth not to be known otherwise to the inner circles of patriotism, and Samuel Adams's commonplace statement, "Rapatio is now gone to

Middleboro to consult his Brother Hazelrod," is after the speech of the time.

The Group is not included in her miscellaneous works. It is a very precious pamphlet, of which the copy belonging to the Boston Athenæum bears, in faded ink, opposite the *dramatis personæ*, the names they wore among men. There is something very curious, very touching, in that cast of characters in these days of reconsidered verdicts. Mercy Warren meant it for an embodied catalogue of vices. It is simply a list of loyalists, most of them honest men, who believed it well not only to serve God but to honor the King: —

Lord Chief-Justice Halzerod [Hazlerod],	Oliver.
Judge Meagae [Meagre],	E. Hutchinson.
Brigadier Hateall,	Ruggles.
Hum Humbug, Esq;	Jn^{o} Erving.
Sir Sparrow Spendall,	Sir W. P. [William Pepperell].
Hector Mushroom, — Col.	Murray.
Beau Trumps,	Jn^{o} Vassall.
Dick, the Publican,	Lechmere.
Monsieur de Francois,	N. R. Thomas.
Crusty Crowbar, Esq;	J. Boutineau.
Dupe, — Sec. of State,	T. Flucker.
Scriblerius Fribble,	Leonard.
Commodore Batteau,	Loring.

Certain of these men were hateful to the patriots for special reasons, but all because they were loyalists. The Oliver family was especially detested. Perhaps Andrew had the least claim on public mercy, because he had accepted the unfortunate office of stamp distributor, and did not save his credit even by publicly renouncing it under the Liberty Tree, in the face of scornful thousands. Peter, the Chief-Justice, sufficiently filled the eye to be prosecuted, banished, and to endure the confiscation of his estates. Elisha Hutchinson was a son of the Governor, and to him and his brother had been consigned a third part of the tea destined to sacrifice in Boston Harbor. To Timothy Ruggles much might have been forgiven, even at the moment of his sturdiest opposition, for he had a pretty wit, albeit a rude one. He was a brave man and a learned. That served him no good turn in the eyes of his enemies; but surely they may have given him one lenient smile, remembering that college escapade when, with other irrepressible students, he stole a sign and conveyed it to his room. A suspicious proctor came mousing up the stairs, but the boys had locked the door, put the sign on the fire, and were holding vigorous prayer-meeting till the inanimate witness should be consumed, — for no student

might be disturbed at prayers. Meanwhile Ruggles wrestled passionately with the angel, and cried aloud: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

But to enter Mrs. Warren's catalogue of crime it was not necessary to have risen in armed resistance to Colonial freedom. It was sufficient, as in the case of Lechmere and Erving, to have signed loyal addresses to Gage and Hutchinson. To Boutineau, somewhat of a personal interest attaches in the fact that he was the father-in-law of John Robinson, who, in 1769, had been guilty of the attack on James Otis. He defended Robinson in the resulting suit, and when the man was judged guilty and assessed two thousand pounds' damages, signed in his own name the submission craving Otis's pardon. Thereupon the latter released the offender from payment of his bond.

The Group was submitted to Mrs. Warren's little public (*parva sed apta!*) in parts, as scenes were completed. It is delightful to see how humbly she set all her work before one indulgent critic, her husband. One poem, despatched when there was much to hear and answer, can be no other than the effusion on the Tea Party, to which she refers as a "per-

formance done in consequence of the request of a much respected friend. It was wrote off with little attention . . . I do not think it has sufficient merit for the public eye." She adds: —

"I now send you another scene of the Group — this you will dispose of as you judge proper. but whatever you do with either of them you will doubtless be careful that the author is not exposed and hope your particular friends will be convinced of the propriety of not naming her at present."

It must have been a fond pride with which James Warren displayed the work of his "little angel," conscious that it could challenge criticism among such men as his associates. Even at that time, when women were willing to take the bitter with the sweet and own themselves weaker as well as fair, Mercy Warren had, so far as her husband was concerned, all the rights she could have desired, — a faith and tender homage which left her free to act.

Later she made a timid effort to see her tragedies in print, perhaps even (O last infirmity of all our noble minds!) on the stage. She writes John Adams, adviser, friend, and confidant: —

MILTON Jan 4th 1787

SIR, — The most of my leasure hours since I have resided on the Hill at Milton have been devoted to my pen, yet I have never adventured to lay any of the productions before the public eye. But I have such full confidence in your judgment & friendship that I now submit to you either to dispose of to the best advantage or to return by some safe hand a Dramatic Work composed about two years since, & locked up privately in my cabinet. I am sensible the writing an unexceptionable tragedy requires Judgment Genius & Leasure. There fore [I] have felt a great degree of diffidence in the Attempt & own myself a very improper judge of the merits of the execution. But two or three judicious friends to whom I have shown it have pronounced so favourably as to induce me to offer it to your inspection Who I know will make the most candid & generous use thereof.

I am told that works of this nature when they happen to strike will yeald a considerable profit by the sale, — I had no Views of this kind when it was written, & it is now far from being a primary object. it was wrote at the request of a young Gentleman & Friend of yours while separated from his Connexions & Country. But as I am informed it is customary for Men even of Fortune & ability in the Country where you reside not to give away their time — it may not be thought censuarable for your American correspond-

ent to make the best use of hers both for herself & her family. Therefore if at any Value you will dispose of this little Work to the most advantage of your friends: if it is of none you will never expose the temerity that attempted it.

To no other Person would I entrust the secret. of no other Gentleman whose time is chiefly devoted to the most important National affairs would I ask such a favour. But having your unshaken friendship I am sure it is perfectly safe and that you will not regret the proper attention it may require. you will see the Dedication is to yourself, which you will correct or curtail as you shall judge most for the Honour of the Patron and the Patronized. Esteem & respect might have prompted me to say many more things which are justly due to the character of my Honourable Friend but anything that might bear the smallest imputation of flattery would be equally painful to him & to myself. And as I am ambitious to avoid both the principles & the stile of the Vulgar Dedication I have suppressed them. . . . And shall I go on to tell you sir that certain annals recorded as events took place have lately been thrown into a concise History of the American Revolution by the same Hand.

Mr. Adams's reply is dated "London Decr 25 1787":—

Madam, — The Sack of Rome has so much merit in itself that for the honour of America, I

should wish to see it acted on the Stage in London. The Dedication of it does so much honour to me, that I should be proud to see it in print even if it could not be acted. I have shewn it, in discreet Confidence to several good judges, but least their opinion might not be satisfactory I procured it at last to be seriously read by several of the first tragical Writers in this nation, among whom were the Author of the Grecian Daughter and the Author of the Carmelite. They have noted their opinion in a writing that is inclosed. It requires almost as much interest and Intrigue to get a Play Acted, as to be a Member of Parliament, and a printed Play that has not been Acted will not sell —I have not been able to find a Printer who would accept the Copy on Condition of printing it.

In short nothing American sells here. Ramsays History Dwight & Barlows Poems are not sold, nor, I fear will Dr Gordons notwithstanding the . . . materials he must be possessed of.

The Adulator and The Retreat had preceded The Group, and though far less harmonious in conception, they were equally incisive and pregnant of result. These were fragments suggested by the discovery of the Hutchinson and Oliver letters, — private letters warm with personal conclusions which Dr. Franklin had secured in England and sent back to America, on condition that they should not be

printed, and that they should be returned, no copies having been taken. Through a wily combination of circumstances, they did get into print, and their perusal inflamed the patriots to frenzy. In the after-light of historical reflection, they seem to hint at no more pronounced opinion than the writers themselves had sustained in public; and altogether the case made "a marvelously strong illustration of the most vehement possible cry, with the slightest possible amount of wool."

But not such were the fatal documents at the moment. They proved a terrible motive power to precipitate results. In these two dramatic fragments of Mrs. Warren's, Hutchinson is always Rapatio, the hated, the venal, the hypocrite doubly damned because he sinned by intention and love of self and intrinsic evil. Let the author herself define her motive in writing them: —

"At a period when America stood trembling for her invaded liberty when the refined acts of certain interested politians had spread the tales of falsehood untill the people as usual were deceived in characters . . . several dramatic sketches were offered the public with a design to strip the Vizard from the Crafty.

"The writer recollecting the maxim of the Car-

dinal de Retz that 'a song will sometimes more forcibly impress the necessary political operations than the most solid arguments or the most judicious reasonings,' advertised March, 1772, to be exhibited for the entertainment of the public at the grand parade in upper Servia the Adulator a theatrical performance of three acts."

Then follows a cast of characters quite as significant as that of The Group, wherein Governor Hutchinson figures as Rapatio, Bashaw of Servia; Andrew Oliver as Limpet, Peter Oliver as Hazelrod, and James Otis as Brutus, Senator.

"The above Dramatic Extract was deemed so characteristic of the times and the persons to whom applied that it was honoured with the voice of general approbation: — but before the author thought proper to present another scene to the public it was taken up and interlarded with the productions of an unknown hand. The plagiary swelled the Adulator to a considerable pamphlet. this led the author of the sketch when she again resumed the design of bringing the delinquents on the stage to give a new title."

As a proper prologue, the author has selected "eight lines from a celebrated writer:" —

> "Oh! how I laugh when I a blockhead see
> Thanking a villain for his probity.

Who stretches out a most respectful ear
With snares for Wood-Cocks in his holy leer;
It tickles through my soul to see the Cock's
Sincere encomiums on his friend the Fox,
Sole patron of her liberties and rights
While graceless Reynard listens till he bites."

Within this list of characters there is an overpowering scale of virtues; for after the Tory contingent, appear, in conscious rectitude: —

Helvidius,	Hon.	J. Winthrop,	Esq.
Cassius,	"	S. Adams,	"
Hortensius,	"	J. Adams,	"
Rusticus,	"	J. Warren,	"
Honestus,	"	J. Bowdoin,	"
Brutus,	"	J. Otis,	"

In 1790, appeared the little book of Poems Dramatic and Miscellaneous Printed at Boston, by I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, At Faust's Statue, No. 45, Newbury Street. The dedication was, like all her work, submitted to James Warren. Though anything but a literary man, he evidently filled for her the requirements of taste and solid sense; or perhaps she took pleasure, like other loving womankind, in assuming for him a headship over her own province as well as his. This dedication was to "George Washington, President of the United States of America," and it

brought forth a letter in that gentleman's usual restrained and courtly style: —

New York, June 4, 1790.

Madam, — I did not receive before the last Mail the letter wherein you favored me with a copy of the Dedication which you propose affixing to a Work preparing for publication. — Although I have ever wished to avoid being drawn into public view more than was essentially necessary for public purposes; yet, on the present occasion, duly sensible of the merits of the respectable and admirable writer I shall not hesitate to accept the intended honor.

With only leisure to thank you for your indulgent sentiments, and to wish that your Work may meet with the encouragement which I have no doubt it deserves, I hasten to present the compliments of Mrs. Washington, and to subscribe myself, with great esteem and regard,

Madam,
Your Most Obedient and Very Humble Servt,
G. Washington.

Several months afterwards came his distinguished recognition of the work itself: —

Mt. Vernon, Nov. 4th, 1790.

Madam, — My engagements since the receipt of your letter of the 12th of Sept., with which I was honored two days ago, have prevented an attentive perusal of the Book that accompanied it

— but, from the reputation of its Author — from the parts I have read — and from a general idea of the pieces, I am persuaded of its gracious and distinguished reception by the friends of virtue and science.

George Washington was not alone in commending it to "virtue and science," and Samuel Adams's congratulatory note in acknowledging a copy but voices the delighted admiration of a widening circle: —

"However foolishly some European writers may have Sported with American Reputation for Genius, Literature and Science: I know not where they will find a female Poet of their own to prefer to the ingenious Author of these Compositions."

The book is chiefly occupied by two long and very dull tragedies: The Sack of Rome and The Ladies of Castile, — dull, yet truly significant in that they mirror the constant tendency of the author's mind. Throughout her life she was almost morbidly apprehensive over the danger which might befall the hardier virtues of a state by the enervating approaches of luxury. The old Spartan principles of toil and endurance were, in her mind, never too austere. In her preface to The Sack of Rome she avows the motives which have led her to select the period in question: —

"The subversion of the western empire, and the Sack of the city of Rome, by Genseric, form an era in the revolution of human affairs, that strikes the mind with peculiar solemnity: Perhaps, at that period, the character of man was sunk to the lowest stage of depravity. Debilitated by the habits of every species of luxury, a long series of tragical events, and the continual apprehensions of proscription, or death; the powers of the mind were, at the same time, obscured by the superstitions of weak, uninformed christians, blended with the barbarism and ignorance of the darker ages. . . .

"In tracing the rise, the character, the revolutions, and the fall of the most politic and brave, the most insolent and selfish people, the world ever exhibited, the hero and the moralist may find the most sublime examples of valour and virtue; and the philosopher the most humiliating lessons to the pride of man, in the turpitude of some of their capital characters: While the extensive dominions of that once celebrated nation, their haughty usurpations and splendid crimes, have for ages furnished the historian and the poet with a field of speculation, adapted to his own peculiar talents. But if the writer of the *Sack of Rome* has mistaken her's, she will, doubtless, be forgiven, as there have been instances of men of the best abilities who have fallen into the same error."

She concludes with one paragraph which strikes pathetically upon the ear of every man

or woman of letters who has been bitten by that peculiar madness, — the desire to write a play and to see its characters rise and walk: —

"Theatrical amusements may, sometimes, have been prostituted to the purposes of vice; yet, in an age of taste and refinement, lessons of morality, and the consequences of deviation, may perhaps, be as successfully enforced from the stage, as by modes of instruction, less censured by the severe; while, at the same time, the exhibition of great historical events, opens a field of contemplation to the reflecting and philosophic mind."

The Ladies of Castile is equally significant of her temper of mind. Her son Winslow, then abroad, had suggested her writing a tragedy, and the stately preface, addressed to "a Young Gentleman in Europe," indicates an equally characteristic motive for her choice of this Spanish period. Winslow had prohibited an American subject, and "seemed to have no predilection in favor of British incident. Therefore, notwithstanding events in the western world have outrun imagination, notwithstanding the magnitude of prospect a rising empire displays, and the many tragical scenes exhibited on an island whence it derived its origin, I have recurred to an ancient story

in the annals of Spain, in her last struggles for liberty, previous to the complete establishment of despotism by the family of Ferdinand."

Liberty, always liberty! And in a soliloquy of Donna Maria, wife of the commander of the Spanish troops, certain significant words might have been spoken by Mercy Warren herself, in a like tragic exigency:

"But if, ungratefully, ye spurn the gift,
And fly the field, and yield the proffer'd prize —
Bend thy weak necks, and servilely submit,
Affronted virtue leaves such dastard slaves
To faint and tremble at a despot's nod.
"I, for myself, a bolder part design;
And here, before the soldiers and the Cortes,
In presence of the eternal King, I swear,
Most solemnly I bind my free born soul,
Ere I will live a slave, and kiss the hand
That o'er my country clanks a servile chain,
I'll light the towers, and perish in the flames,
And smile and triumph in the general wreck.
"Come, shew one sample of heroic worth,
Ere ancient Spain, the glory of the west,
Bends abject down — by all the nations scorn'd: —
Secure the city — barricade the gates,
And meet me arm'd with all the faithful bands:
I'll head the troops, and mount the prancing steed;
The courser guide, and vengeance pour along
Amidst the ranks, and teach the slaves of Charles
Not Semiramis' or Zenobia's fame
Outstrips the glory of Maria's name."

The rest of the poems are nearly all occasional: To Fidelio, Long absent on the great

public Cause, which agitated all America, in 1776, To the Hon. J. Winthrop, Esq., To a Young Gentleman Residing in France, and the like. Yet these were not all. To study the pile of yellowed manuscript in the obscure but painstaking chirography of that hand which seemed never to tire, is to find page after page of rhymed and metrical reflection. The wonder is, with this Revolutionary dame, that she found time for such an extraordinary amount of work. She owns once, in a comparative estimate of the status of men and women, that woman's mental labor is far harder to pursue because it must be interrupted by household cares; but she says it without complaint. Her own domestic life was full to the brim. She could have found little time for literature. She had five boys to educate and train. She had an enormous correspondence; and yet, ever welling into light, is this irrepressible desire to put the world into verse. She copies her own letters, and those of other people. Her clerical labors are enough to afflict a scribe.

But this does not prevent her from addressing "lines" to all her little world. She apostrophizes Winter, paraphrases the Nineteenth Psalm, and prayerfully indites a solemn Address to the Supreme Being. Her unpublished

poems are perhaps more abounding in sentiment and sensibility than those which received the sanction of print: On reading the History of the Sufferings of the Divine Redeemer; A Thought in Sickness; A Thought on the inestimable Blessing of Reason; On Hearing of the Sudden Death of a Sister; Alluding to the Sudden Death of a Gentleman a few days after Marriage; On the Early Death of two Beautiful Young Ladies Misses Eliza and Abigail Otis; From my Window in a very Clear Starlight Evening; Extempore to a Young Person beholding the motion of a Clock.

She writes an interminable set of Alphabetical Maxims to her little granddaughter Marcia, of which she thought well enough to send them to the Reverend James Freeman, to receive in return only a courteous phrase of thanks with no commendation. They begin:

> "This Alphabet, Marcia, is not made for a child,
> But for ripening merit, if not early spoil'd: —
> Do you wish to be handsome? — believe me tis true
> There 's nothing you say, or aught you can do,
> Will beauty improve, or adorn a fine face,
> Like Good-Nature & Science, assisted by Grace."

"Admiration gazes with pleasure on a handsome face, but beauty without the graces of person, makes no lasting impression, and more frequently disgusts than pleases."

And so it trails its moralizing length to Xantippe, Youth, and Zeal. Poor little granddaughter, Mercy Otis Warren! Did she stagger long under the delusion that all child literature was like this?

But Mercy Warren's place is not among the poets. She has left no line so inevitable, so perfect, as to have struck root into the soil of literature, to grow and flourish there. In form she is strained and artificial, like the greater of her day; and it is only her abiding earnestness which succeeds in loosening the shackles of too elaborate artifice and lets her breathe and speak. Her home is among those fighting souls who swayed the time through onslaught upon special abuses. That her work was thrown into poetical form does not debar her from taking her rightful stand among the pamphleteers. For this was the age of the political pamphlet. It flourished as the theological essay had done at an earlier date. When the political situation had become unbearable, and the air was heavy with thought, the lightning of words played hotly. There was little time for considered literary effort, but great will for hurling polemical fire-balls, and they flew thick and fast.

The struggle had not fairly begun when James Otis published his Vindication of the

Conduct of the House of Representatives. After the Boston Massacre and the trial of Captain Preston, Samuel Adams, over the signature Vindex, reviewed the testimony in a series of papers tending to prove the evil designs of the British soldiery, and thus astutely fanning the flame of Colonial resentment. John Dickinson, the "Pennsylvania Farmer," created much pother through Letters. Thomas Paine's Common Sense struck a bold blow in advocacy of an independent republic, and that while it was treason even to formulate the thought. John Adams entered the arena, and, as Novanglus, answered through the newspapers the defence of Great Britain set forth by Massachusettensis (Jonathan Sewall). These letters appeared throughout the winters of 1774 and 1775, until the wordy warfare was cut short by the battle of Lexington; and therein Adams traced the origin of the struggle, and the policy of Bernard and Hutchinson with a vigor which owed nothing to deliberate workmanship.

There were many such pseudonyms, lightly cloaking patriotic zeal. There were other anonymous correspondents as powerful and fervent, who can never now be traced. And throughout the entire struggle Mercy Warren hung upon the enemy's flank and harassed

him without cessation. She was one of the gadflies of the war. A circumstance which rendered her services invaluable is that she was always ready. When an egg was found in Plymouth, bearing the legend, "Howe will conquer," it was Mrs. Warren who at once sat down — possibly in an interval of needlework or brewing — and wrote a counterblast in her customary satirical vein, reducing egg and prophecy to naught. A rhymed dissertation on "A Solemn debate of a certain bench of Justices to form an address to Governor Hutchinson just before he left the Chair" is in her own uncompromising humor; but perhaps the best of her unpublished work comes under the heading, "An Extempore Thought on a late flattering address to Governor Hutchinson," or, as she bitterly denominates it elsewhere in a hasty note, a "servile address from the long venerated Seminary of Harvard Colledge": —

"Oxonia's sons in abject lays
Could chaunt their idle fulsome praise
To Stewarts treacherous line;
Their adulating strains express
With servile flattery's address
And own the right divine.

"Then Freedom found a safe retreat
In Harvard's venerated seat.
A liberal plan was layed.

How will her annals be disgraced
How Harvard's sons are thus debased
The Gen'rous Works betrayed.

"A Tyrant's trophies to adorn
Thy noble ancestors would scorn
In ancient virtuous days.
No sacred texts they'd violate
(But weep to see thy fallen state)
A parricide to praise."

Much as we have in hand to prove her zeal and faithfulness, doubtless far more lies hidden under the seal of anonymous contributions. That one who wrote so fearlessly and with so prolific a pen should have given abundantly to the newspaper warfare of the day is inevitable. She hints as much in the denial that she wrote certain communications which had been ascribed to her; but she expresses no surprise at having been thus credited. The accusation was no new thing. She was one of the teachers of the time; she reiterated, she insisted and warned. Like John Adams in his quest for gunpowder, she was determined to think of nothing but liberty, and to repeat that splendid cry until the echo, at least, came back from other mouths.

VIII

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION

Doubtless Mrs. Warren would have considered her History of the Revolution the crowning labor of her life, the evidence through which it should afterwards be weighed. It had been undertaken, like most of her literary work, under the spur of expectation and praise from without. Her husband fondly urged her to it, and a circle of ever-admiring friends lovingly demanded it of her. It seemed to them a fit tribute to be paid by one who had been so nearly a part of those colossal events, before she should pass on and leave the estimate of the times to those who might know them only by hearsay. They were ready to assert full confidence in her mental poise and grasp. But she had her moments of doubt, when, with afflictions gathered round her, she said, in resignation and despair, that if the work should never be desired by the public, it would at least be precious to her children. To them alone it would have a peculiar value as the record of their mother's mental life.

An existing manuscript of those three volumes is a pathetic sight, and especially does the prefatory inscription appeal to the heart. After the publication of the work it was recopied upon thick foolscap paper, yellowed now with age; it is in the handwriting of Mrs. Warren and her son James, and the initial inscription explains that many notes are included which may be required for the second edition for which this copy was made ready. Sad confirmation of that uncertainty of result which must ever pervade the world of letters! For every book is the launching of a little craft, in ignorance whether its light is to live or go down into darkness and never be heard of more; and though Mrs. Warren might thriftily prepare for her second edition, no one could guess whether it would ever be demanded. Some of the notes are written on scraps of paper fastened to the page by old-fashioned, clumsy pins. Did Madam Warren's precise hand fix them there? So they have rested for more than three-quarters of a century.

One note especially is of much interest to the student of Boston society as it existed a hundred years ago. In the printed volume of her history Mrs. Warren gives the following stanza, written on the death of James Otis,

referring to the author as "a gentleman of poetic talents": —

> "When God in anger saw the spot,
> On earth to Otis given,
> In thunder as from Sinai's mount,
> He snatch'd him back to heaven."

But in the manuscript note the initials of the author are appended: "Dr. S. C." Surely, Dr. Cooper!

The History was not published until 1805, but it was completed before the end of the previous century. In 1803, there was talk of a subscription list, and of getting the work into the hands of the printer. And that brings into remembrance one of the most interesting circumstances connected with its publication, — the influence of its godfather, the Rev. James Freeman, that serene and lovely soul who was in this country the first avowed preacher of Unitarianism under that name. He was a literary man to the finger-tips, even though he did once say, with his humorous gentleness: —

> "All books are too long. I know only one book which is not too long, and that is Robinson Crusoe; and I sometimes think that a little too long."

His letters to Mrs. Warren especially appeal to the student of book-making. Dr. Freeman

was an excellent man according to the moral law, but he had likewise a typographical religion which is also, in the eyes of many among us, a very good thing. Letters are swiftly exchanged between him and Mrs. Warren on this momentous subject of publishing a book, though the birth was not such matter of travail as the great Cotton Mather's Magnalia. Book-making had grown to be an easier question than in his time, a century before. But to realize that life was marching then as swiftly as it has for us, since Mercy Warren's day, it is only necessary to glance back at the Sisyphus labor of getting into print in 1700. No one can better Mrs. Earle's paraphrase of Mather's story: —

"At the first definite plan which he formulated in his mind of his history of New England, he 'cried mightily to God;' and he went through a series of fasts and vigils at intervals until the book was completed, when he held extended exercises of secret thanksgiving. Prostrate on his study floor, in the dust, he joyfully received full assurance in his heart from God that his work would be successful. But writing the book is not all the work, as any author knows; and he then had much distress and many troubled fasts over the best way of printing it, of transporting it to England; and when at last he placed his 'elaborate composures'

on shipboard, he prayed an entire day. No ascetic Papist ever observed fastdays more rigorously than did Cotton Mather while his book was on its long sea-voyage and in England. He sent it in June in the year 1700, and did not hear from it till December. . . . Then he learned that the printers were cold; the expense of publication would be £600, a goodly sum to venture; it was 'clogged by the dispositions' of the man to whom it was sent; it was delayed and obstructed; he was left strangely in the dark about it; months passed without any news. Still his faith in God supported him. At last a sainted Christian came forward in London, a stranger, and offered to print the book at his own expense and give the author as many copies as he wished. That was in what Carlyle called 'the Day of Dedications and Patrons, not of Bargains with Booksellers.' In October, 1702, after two and a half long years of waiting, one copy of the wished-for volume arrived, and the author and his dearest friend, Mr. Bromfield, piously greeted it with a day of solemn fasting and praise."

But Mercy Warren had much advice to ask, and Dr. Freeman was delightfully scrupulous and accurate in answer. One tell-tale circumstance in his correspondence strikes with a familiar ring upon the ear, betokening the hard-pressed student, the dilatory man of letters who has so much to do with the pen that he takes it up only under protest. For usually

he begins with an excuse for delay. He has not "married a wife," or "bought five yoke of oxen," in Biblical phrase, but he has been prevented, unavoidably prevented, from writing sooner! One paragraph has a peculiar interest for the student of international differences, concerning, as it does, our early divergence from the English on an irritating point: —

"Your letter respecting the letter *u* I have not yet rec'd; but I understood, when I had the happiness of visiting you at Plymouth, that it was your plan to leave it out in all words of Latin origin, such as *honor*, *error*, & to retain it only in words of Saxon origin, such as *endeavour*. Accordingly I directed Messrs. Manning & Loring to print in this manner. This orthography is adopted by many good authors; and as it is begun, I would advise you to persevere in it to the end of the work."

He then continues with that loving care for detail which distinguishes the true man of letters, to say that the best way of judging a titlepage is to have one struck off. This the printers shall do, according to his direction, upon which he will send it for Mrs. Warren's approval. For himself, he adds, with a good taste which might well be emulated in this modern day of the revival of book-making, he judges that a titlepage should be simple and

in few words, and not disfigured with black letters and printer's ornaments. Then with the same studious consideration, he goes on to speak of mottoes, concerning which Mrs. Warren has asked his advice: —

The motto to a title page is generally a Latin sentence. The best passages of the ancient authors have been anticipated by former historians; but the following, I believe, have never been used. —

Quia fuit durum pati,
Meminisse dulce est. SENECA.

This sentence will apply to the author and her friends, & to others who took active part in the revolution, to whom it must be pleasant to remember the toils and dangers through which they have passed.

Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
Per campos instructa, tuâ sine parte periculi. LUCRETIUS.

These lines will apply to the young reader, who in history contemplates with delight battles and other scenes of distress, in the dangers of which he does not participate.

Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem. SENECA.

This motto describes Great Britain, whom at the beginning of the war we saw in all the pride of power, and at its close humbled at our feet.

Invisa nunquam imperia retinentur diu. SENECA.

This verse also refers to Great Britain, whose tyrannical government did not last long.

Et errat longè meâ quidem sententiâ,
Qui imperium credat gravius esse aut stabilius,
Vi quod fit, quam illud quod amicitiâ adjungitur. TERENCE.

These lines likewise apply to Great Britain, who might have retained her connection with the colonies by friendship, but could not by force.

Deus ipse faces animumque ministrat. VIRGIL.

This verse acknowledges the overruling providence of God, who supplied us with arms and courage.

Quis credat tantas operum sine numine moles. MANILIUS.

This line is to the same purpose, and may intend, that so great a work as the American revolution could not have been effected without the interposition of the Deity.

None of these mottoes please me so well as that which you have pointed out. My only motive in suggesting them is to show that I am not inattentive to your request.

With great respect, I remain, dear Madam,

your most obedt Serv't,

JAMES FREEMAN.

However, in spite of this array of pigeonholed learning ready to her hand, Mrs. Warren kept to the honest vernacular, and her page bears Saint Paul's splendid antitheses:

"Troubled on every side . . . perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." And following it, the quotation from Shakespeare: —

> "O God! thy arm was here . . .
> And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
> Ascribe we all."

Further letters from Dr. Freeman mark out the weary way trodden by authors when patronage was not a thing of the past, since, in a measure, subscription is patronage. Before publishing, one must get the consent of one's friends. On February 22, 1803, he writes from Boston: —

"The history, I have no doubt, would meet with a favorable reception from a large part of the community. . . . I would recommend that the work be published as soon as possible. Let Proposals for printing it by Subscription be issued, and put into the hands of your friends, and of the most eminent booksellers of the United States; and in the mean time let a contract be made with printers, who will execute the work in the most correct and elegant manner, and on the most reasonable terms. Having had a great deal of experience in business of this nature, I am able to point out Manning and Loring as the most suitable persons. They understand their art perfectly, and are strictly honest."

Now comes the up-hill business of the subscription list. February 20, 1805, he says: —

"... I have postponed writing you, till I could give you some account of my success in obtaining Subscriptions. Many gentlemen, whom I have expected to meet in a body, I have, from unavoidable accidents, missed seeing. I have however communicated the proposals to several of my friends, who have readily put their names to the paper. About the beginning of March the Historical Society will assemble, when I shall not fail to urge the business to the utmost of my power."

Another letter, dated October 13, 1803, is full of a purely technical interest: —

MADAM, — ... I have seen Messrs Manning and Loring, who, after taking time for consideration, have communicated to me the terms on which they will engage to print your History of the Revolutionary War. If the work is impressed on small pica type, they demand sixteen dollars, fifty cents, for their labour, a Sheet, a Sheet containing sixteen pages. If on pica type, which is of a larger and more suitable size, and on which I presume you made your calculation, the price will be thirteen dollars, fifty cents a Sheet. As each volume you say, will consist of upwards of four hundred pages, I will take it for granted that the three volumes will contain about thirteen hundred pages, or about eighty-two sheets. The cost therefore of

printing at $13.50 a Sheet will be $1107. The whole work will consume about 265 reams of paper, if fifteen hundred copies are printed. The paper ought to be of the quality of that which is sold at $5 a ream, which will make the expense of the paper $1325. Books in this country are commonly delivered to subscribers bound in leather. But this is a bad method, as a book is much injured in its appearance if it is bound before it has been printed at least a year. The European practice of publishing in boards is the best on every account. If you should issue your History in this form, the cost will be, for three times fifteen hundred volumes, or 4500 volumes, at .10 Cents each — $450. The whole expense therefore (excepting issuing proposals, advertising, &c) will be as follows:

$1107–	Printing
1325–	Paper
450–	Binding in blue boards

Total 2882, which will make each volume cost you .64 Cents or $1.92 Cents for the three. The volumes ought to be sold at $2 each. The sale therefore of 481 copies would cover the whole expense (excepting as above). If the books are bound in Sheep, the price will be 2 Shillings each; if in calf .75 Cents.

Mr. Larkin, the bookseller informs me that he has made your son an offer to publish the history at his own risk, paying you a certain sum of money, after eight hundred copies are sold. I believe him

to be an honourable man, and that his proposal would be esteemed advantageous by authors in general.

An estimate of the present year gives the type-setting and press-work of the same book as $1,316.70, the price of paper $500.40, and that of binding in boards $585.00, — a total of $2,402.10; proving at a glance that labor has become higher, while paper is much reduced. Thus the identical books could be manufactured for nearly five hundred dollars less than at the beginning of the century. But in at least one particular the most æsthetic printing of the day coincides with the older standard; for Mr. William Morris declares with Dr. Freeman that a book should be printed at least a year before being bound.

Two years later he is writing to say that, amid some discouragements, the subscriptions are coming in, and he adds: —

"I would most cheerfully undertake the correction of the press, if it is inconvenient for you to attend to it; but as the proofs are generally sent in the evening, and I never spend a night in town, I fear I could not be entirely depended on. I will, however, engage to do what I can, and, if agreeable to you, ask Mr. Emerson, the minister of the Old Brick, to supply my place, when I am out of

the way. He is always ready to perform these obliging offices, & I have the most perfect confidence in his accuracy. It would be necessary to have a third person in reference; and I can think of none at present more suitable than Mr. George Blake, who is a very good scholar."

With the same nicety of dealing with detail, he goes on to tell her that an index will be necessary, and to give her careful directions for its compilation. Finally he sends the joyful news that he has seen two or three proof-sheets, which are eminently satisfactory, and he adds, in words calculated to reach the heart of the hard-tasked author of any time: —

"The progress of a work through the press is to an author of sensibility and talents a season of great anxiety. I congratulate you that one third of these painful moments have passed. I hope you will soon have the pleasure of dispatching the last proof sheet, when your mind being relieved of a weight of care, you can cheerfully repeat,

'Now my tedious task is done,
I can fly, and I can run.'"

Perhaps the chief drawback of the History, from a literary point of view, is that it proves to be what the titlepage honestly leads you to expect, "Interspersed with Biographical,

Political, and Moral Observations." Mrs. Warren was, as we have been accustomed to find her, too abstract, too sparing of the red blood of life. She is a little dry and very verbose, and it perhaps seems to us now that she had not always a judicious discrimination as to the relative value of events. Her portraits are very bold, very trenchant, as those of an "incomparable satirist" must ever be; but they are not portraits after the Clarendon type, — warm, living, and dressed in English which could not have been imagined otherwise. When she wholly approves she is less graphic than when she recoils through moral aversion. Witness her characterization of George Washington, which is exceedingly dignified, but runs as sluggish as a fenland stream: —

"Mr. Washington was a gentleman of family and fortune, of a polite, but not a learned education; he appeared to possess a coolness of temper, and a degree of moderation and judgment, that qualified him for the elevated station in which he was now placed; with some considerable knowledge of mankind, he supported the reserve of the statesman, with the occasional affability of the courtier. In his character was blended a certain dignity, united with the appearance of good humour; he possessed courage without rashness, patriotism and zeal with-

out acrimony, and retained with universal applause the first military command, until the establishment of independence. Through the various changes of fortune in the subsequent conflict, though the slowness of his movements was censured by some, his character suffered little diminution to the conclusion of a war, that from the extraordinary exigencies of an infant republic, required at times the caution of Fabius, the energies of Cæsar, and the happy facility of expedient in distress, so remarkable in the military operations of the illustrious Frederick [of Prussia]. With the first of these qualities, he was endowed by nature; the second was awakened by necessity; and the third he acquired by experience in the field of glory and danger, which extended his fame through half the globe."

It is only when she approaches Thomas Hutchinson, the object of what seems to her a just detestation, that she becomes truly piquant and human; after remarking that "it is ever painful to a candid mind to exhibit the deformed features of its own species," she goes on to characterize him as "dark, intriguing, insinuating, haughty and ambitious, while the extreme of avarice marked each feature of his character. His abilities were little elevated above the line of mediocrity; yet by dint of industry, exact temperance, and indefatigable labor, he became master of

the accomplishments necessary to acquire popular fame. . . . He had acquired some knowledge of the *common law* of England, diligently studied the intricacies of *Machiavelian* policy, and never failed to recommend the Italian master as a model to his adherents."

This, as has been said, is one of the judgments of the time which posterity has reversed. Mrs. Warren was no less enlightened, no less keen of vision than her associates; but they were all too near the object of their scrutiny, and too hot-headed with the rage born of oppression to judge justly. Thomas Hutchinson was not perhaps a martyr, but he was a most intelligent man, who tried conscientiously to perform the duties of an impossible situation, and failed, as any one would have failed who had not gone over, heart and soul, to the Colonists.

Perhaps the worst thing that can be said about him is that he had no sense of humor. He was a man of clear, judicial mind, and great moderation, candor, and fairness, which became apparent in his historical work, — a man with a sincere love of his native country, but one who held what then seemed a gigantic and monstrous delusion: that America should, at any cost, form an obedient part of the regnant kingdom, her head. Other good men of the

day believed the same heinous article, and did not hesitate to act in favor of it; but at that intensely partisan moment they were proscribed and without honor.

Her cool down-setting of Hancock is refreshing, as applied to a popular idol: —

"Mr. Hancock was a young gentleman of fortune, of more external accomplishments than real abilities. He was polite in manners, easy in address, affable, civil, and liberal. With these accomplishments, he was capricious, sanguine, and implacable: naturally generous, he was profuse in expense; he scattered largesses without discretion, and purchased favors by the waste of wealth, until he reached the ultimatum of his wishes, which centred in the focus of popular applause. He enlisted early in the cause of his country, at the instigation of some gentlemen of penetration, who thought his ample fortune might give consideration, while his fickleness could not injure, so long as he was under the influence of men of superior judgment. They complimented him by nominations to committees of importance, till he plunged too far to recede; and flattered by ideas of his own consequence, he had taken a decided part before the battle of Lexington, and was president of the provincial congress, when that event took place."

Hers was no light task, — to face her own contemporaries with what she intended for ab-

solutely faithful portraits, drawn without fear or favor. There can be no doubt that she wrote her History with a religious fervor consecrated to the cause of truth and justice. When she erred it was through the natural fallibility of human eyes when they dare to scrutinize human motives. Perhaps none of her descriptions approach so near the standards of truth and of good literature combined as that of Samuel Adams: —

"Mr. Adams was a gentleman of good education, a decent family, but no fortune. Early nurtured in the principles of civil and religious liberty, he possessed a quick understanding, a cool head, stern manners, a smooth address, and a Roman-like firmness, united with that sagacity and penetration that would have made a figure in a conclave. He was at the same time liberal in opinion, and uniformly devout; social with men of all denominations, grave in deportment; placid, yet severe; sober and indefatigable; calm in seasons of difficulty, tranquil and unruffled in the vortex of political altercation; too firm to be intimidated, too haughty for condescension, his mind was replete with resources that dissipated fear, and extricated in the greatest emergencies."

Throughout her History Mrs. Warren never deviates from the sternest patriotism, which displays itself nowhere more plainly than in

her prevailing distrust of the Order of the Cincinnati. She traces its development, owning, in every line, her timidity over the tendency of an order militating against republican principles; and she says, in her usually emphatic style (Mrs. Warren herself would have called it a "nervous" style): —

"As the officers of the American army had styled themselves of the order, and assumed the name of Cincinnatus, it might have been expected that they would have imitated the humble and disinterested virtues of the ancient Roman; that they would have retired satisfied with their own efforts to save their country, and the competent rewards it was ready to bestow, instead of ostentatiously assuming hereditary distinctions, and the *insignia* of nobility. But the eagle and the ribbon dangled at the button-hole of every youth who had for three years borne an office in the army, and taught him to look down with proud contempt on the patriot grown grey in the service of his country."

She refrains, with scrupulous veneration, from censuring Washington for becoming, in 1783, the President of the Society, but she quotes the opinion of others in an impartial fashion which leaves us in no doubt of the complexion of her own: —

"It was observed," she says, "by a writer in England, that 'this was the only blot hitherto dis-

covered in the character of this venerable hero.' The same writer adds — 'It is impossible, however, to exculpate him: if he understood the tendency of his conduct, his ideas of liberty must have been less pure and elevated than they have been represented; and if he rushed into the measure blindfold, he must still be considered as wanting in some degree, that penetration and presence of mind so necessary to complete his character.' He was censured by several opposed to such an institution, who wrote on the subject both in Europe and America: it was considered as a blameable deviation in him from the principles of the revolution which he had defended by his sword, and appeared now ready to relinquish by his example."

IX

AN HISTORIC DIFFERENCE

THE History of the Revolution had its epilogue: a controversy which Mrs. Warren had all unwittingly provoked, and which was of an aspect to mar the satisfaction of any author in the publication of his dearest book. To her it must have proved a heavy cross, though, even under attack, she would not have withdrawn a syllable from what she had written, no matter how severely it might be questioned. She was a just woman, and she had said her say in what appeared to her absolute impartiality; but she was also a woman of strong affections, and I believe she would gladly have cast the whole work to the "oozy nymphs," if she might thus have spared offence to one of her old associates. This controversy over her book does, indeed, constitute a very pretty quarrel as it stands, proceeding in the classical fashion, from the "retort courteous" to the "countercheck quarrelsome," and touching delicately on the "lie

direct;" after which the disputants "measured swords and parted."

The History had been safely launched upon the world when, on the eleventh of July, 1807, John Adams, then a man of seventy-two years, in residence at Quincy, addressed a letter to Mrs. Warren, saying that he was not about to write a review of her work, but that he wished to point out certain inaccuracies relating to himself, that she might judge whether it would be expedient to correct them for a future edition. In this honestly meant but rather ill-calculated first letter, he brings her to book for saying that "his passions and prejudices were sometimes too strong for his sagacity and judgment," for underrating the value of his commission for negotiating with Great Britain a treaty of commerce, and for the assertion that "unfortunately for himself and his country, he became so enamoured with the British constitution and the government, manners, and laws of the nation, that a partiality for monarchy appeared, which was inconsistent with his former professions of republicanism."

The letter is warmly written, though with careful restraint, and it must be owned that, in her reply, Mrs. Warren strikes at once the wrong note. She steps out of the common-

wealth of letters, where the passionate artist welcomes censure in order to approach perfection. She throws their difference at once upon the ground of personal animosity. It is, at least, an unfortunate statement made in her opening paragraph: —

"Had not the irritation of the times or some other cause unknown to me have agitated his mind too much for the gentleman or the friend, I should not have received a letter couched in such terms as his of the 11th of July."

So the correspondence continues, Mr. Adams growing warmer and more unguarded in his language, and Mrs. Warren keeping too rigidly the position of feminine invulnerability. From the first she is intrenched in the woman's stronghold of *noli me tangere.* She forgets that in art as in argument, the most unwelcome assertion becomes worthy of respect, if honestly meant. It is quite evident that, until he throws discretion to the winds, and gives rein to that blazing temper of his, Mr. Adams has the best of it, regarding it as a fair up-and-down controversy "with no favor;" for he shells her camp with documentary proof, and justly charges her with those slight inaccuracies which are too prevalent in her work.

Mrs. Warren wields with undeniable effect the weapon of revolt under personal indignity. She inquires midway in the game why she has been so "indecently attacked." She has no hesitation in characterizing his mode of address as "angry and virulent." She touches upon one contingency in a manner which becomes exceedingly interesting in view of the careful preservation of their letters and the share which the world has already taken in them. She tells him that his former letters are not lost.

"Nor," she adds, "do I intend your more recent ones shall ever be lost. They shall be safely deposited for future use, if occasion shall require it."

It was a prophetic suggestion which has been amply fulfilled. Posterity has been admitted to the inner courts of that old friendship, read its inscriptions, and gone away inspired with no less love and reverence for the two fiery patriots. The letters have been published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, not to embalm an ancient difference, but because they contain so much matter of vital interest relating to the Revolutionary period.

It is only fair to own that Mrs. Warren does, at more than one point, assume an

ungenerous attitude. Her antagonist indulges in page after page of passionate recapitulation tending to disprove her assertion that he appeared at one time to "have relinquished the republican system." Thereupon she puts him calmly aside with the dictum that she can "see no pleasure or benefit in dwelling on such a theme, or following a thread spun out to such a length." Surely, if it were her *métier* to draw and publish historical conclusions, it was also a necessity to establish them, when challenged by an old friend whom she had, whether justly or unjustly, wounded to the quick. One phrase especially sticks in the great patriot's throat. She has accused him of "pride of talent," and that "is a notion" he "cannot endure." He refers to it again and again, with increasing bitterness, and it suddenly crops out in his reproach that she should have recognized the appointment of Jay to Madrid, and ignored his own (two days later); whereupon he concludes with the biting remark: —

"I am not able to account, Madam, for your knowledge of one event or your ignorance of the other. If it was not 'pride,' it was presumption 'of talent,' in a lady to write a history with so imperfect information or so little impartiality."

This inevitably rouses a counter-irritation, from which Mrs. Warren replies that after one of his strictures on the knowledge of the "celebrated Mrs. Macaulay," she cannot wonder at his calling it "presumption in a lady to write a History with so little information as Mrs. Warren has acquired. Perhaps that presumption might have been excited by yourself, when, with the warmest expression of friendship, you acknowledged you had received a letter from an *incomparable satirist*, and requested your most profound respects might be presented to her, desiring her husband at the same time to tell her that 'God Almighty (I use a bold style) has intrusted her with powers for the good of the world, which in the course of His providence he bestows upon very few of the human race; that, instead of being a fault to use them, it would be criminal to neglect them.'"

There she had the best of it. His flattery of her, as we have seen, had always been egregious. If she had not been a woman of splendid mental balance and great modesty, it could scarcely have been John Adams's fault if she had believed herself intellectually but little lower than the angels. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that in confronting him with his former attitude, she proves herself

no fair antagonist. She commits the woman's error of recurrence to the past, wilfully goading a man to madness by reminding him, "Thus you used to do; this you used to say." Moreover, she resorts to a feint not altogether admirable by which his arguments are actually subverted to his own undoing. No better instance of such apparent logic and false reasoning exists than in certain cool perversions, whereby she makes him absurd through the counter-assertion to the remarks which have awakened his ire. She says: —

"On what point of ridicule would Mrs. Warren's character stand, were she to write her History over again, and correct her *errors*, as you seem to wish her to do, by contradicting her former assertions. She must tell the world that Mr. Adams was no monarchist; that he had no partiality for the habits, manners, or government of England; that he was a man of fashion, that his polite accomplishments rendered him completely qualified for the refinements of Parisian taste: that he had neither frigidity nor warmth of temper, that his passions were always on a due equipoise; that he was beloved by every man, woman, and child in France; that he had neither ambition nor pride of talents, and that he 'had no talents to be proud of:' that he was never hated by courtiers and partisans, nor thwarted by the Count de Vergennes, but that this minister and himself were always on the most

cordial terms; that he was a favorite of the administrators of the affairs of France; that they loved him for his yielding, compliant temper and manners; that he was always a republican, though he has asserted there was no possibility of understanding or defining the term republicanism; that in France he was always happy; that in England he suppressed the American insurrections by the defence of their Constitutions; that his writings suppressed rebellion, quelled the insurgents, established the State and Federal Constitutions, and gave the United States all the liberty, republicanism and independence they enjoy; that his name was always placed at the head of every public commission; that nothing had been done, that nothing could be done, neither in Europe nor America, without his sketching and drafting the business, from the first opposition to British measures in the year 1764 to signing the treaty of peace with England in the year 1783."

It is easy enough to reduce an antagonist to pulp in this fashion, if you are moderately clever, and willing to adopt a woman's license of speech; but "*ce n'est pas la guerre.*"

In historical narrative, ill-judged suppressions or wrongly balanced statements of fact are surely as damaging to that approximate truth for which the historian should pray, as inaccuracy in regard to fact itself. To write history is to challenge contradiction; and no

one, not even an aged and honored lady, can justly, in that situation, adopt the habit of "uniform silence relative to any criticisms that might appear from public scribblers, or the disquisitions and interrogatories of others in a more private character."

But the cause of this lamentable lapse of friendship was less personal than public. It must be referred to the events of the time and their influence on opposing forces. Mr. Adams and his old friend were unfortunately placed in relation to each other. He was a Federalist, upholding a centralized form of government. Mrs. Warren adhered to what she considered an ideal and abstract republicanism. It was, as we have seen, a constant fear of hers that the republican standard should become tarnished, and that the decay of this young democracy should be brought about through luxury and lust for wealth and titles. She was not alone in including John Adams among those who might minister to such a fear. He had retired to private life under the burden of great unpopularity. He was the "colossus of Independence;" yet by the spirit of the times, the apprehensions of the times, he had been placed in a position which must have proved inexpressibly galling to a man conscious of rectitude of intention. He had been

attacked from without until he was raw and bleeding; and it must have seemed to him, when it came to Mrs. Warren, that he had been wounded in the house of his friends. A man of great directness, of rash, confiding, and sometimes ironical habit of speech, he was more than justified in feeling that when she gave weight to popular calumnies by repeating them, supplemented by the conclusions drawn from her intimate acquaintance with him, the attack was not to be borne. It was true, he had talked of monarchy; but so had other men. In October, 1775, he had written: —

"What think you of a North American Monarchy? Suppose we should appoint a Continental King and a Continental House of Lords, and a Continental House of Commons, to be annually, or triennially or septennially elected? And in this Way make a Supreme American Legislature?"

One bit of her evidence against him is not only pertinent in showing the character of his mind, but it paints in vivid colors the dash and frankness of conversation both at Plymouth and Braintree. She writes: —

"Do you not recollect that, a very short time after this, [1788] Mr. Warren and myself made you a visit at Braintree? The previous conversa-

tion, in the evening, I do not so distinctly remember; but in the morning, at breakfast at your own table, the conversation on the subject of monarchy was resumed. Your ideas appeared to be favorable to monarchy, and to an order of nobility in your own country. Mr. Warren replied, 'I am thankful that I am a plebeian.' You answered: 'No, sir: you are of the nobles. There has been a national aristocracy here ever since the country was settled, — your family at Plymouth, Mrs. Warren's at Barnstable, and many others in very many places that have kept up a distinction similar to nobility.' The conversation subsided by a little mirth.

"Do you not remember that, after breakfast, you and Mr. Warren stood up by the window, and conversed on the situation of the country, on the Southern States, and some principal characters there? You, with a degree of passion, exclaimed, 'They must have a master;' and added, by a stamp with your foot, 'By God, they shall have a master.' In the course of the same evening, you observed that you 'wished to see a monarchy in this country, and an hereditary one too.' To this you say I replied as quick as lightning, 'And so do I too.' If I did, which I do not remember, it must have been with some additional stroke which rendered it a sarcasm."

Perhaps his remark, too, was intended to be taken with a grain of salt.

There was a great deal of more or less serious talk about monarchy at that formative period; but a man was not necessarily less of a patriot for dabbling in it. Conscious of his general intent, of his great services to his country, the specks upon Adams's armor were so small that he must have felt like saying to his friends: "You at least should not have pointed them out." Like every one of us, he wanted to be judged *au large*,— by intention rather than according to the flawed and faulty act.

To Mrs. Warren the entire affair must have been not only painful but distinctly bewildering; for had not John Adams himself written her, in 1775, "The faithful historian delineates characters truly, let the censure fall where it is"? She had honestly obeyed him. She had used the lash, and he had not only winced but retaliated. Let it be again remembered that these conclusions of hers were not hers alone. They were duplicated in popular feeling. Even certain unnecessary personal strictures were matters of common belief. She had naïvely and honestly set down that "his genius was not altogether calculated for a court life amidst the conviviality and gayety of Parisian taste." She had pictured him as "ridiculed by the fashionable and polite as

deficient in the *je ne sais quoi* so necessary in polished society," to which he bitterly responds: "Franklin, Jay, Laurens, Jefferson, Munroe, Livingston, Morris, and Armstrong, I suppose, were not deficient in this *je ne sais quoi.*"

Although Mrs. Warren was a woman of "sensibility," I cannot help thinking that a sense of humor would have enabled her to guess that a spade must be dignified by some euphemism when it comes to personal habits and manners; yet she was not alone in that criticism, and probably she was quite right. John Adams was a plain man and no courtier; and no shame to him for that. In 1787, Jonathan Sewall wrote to a friend in regard to Adams: —

"He is not qualified, by nature or education, to shine in courts. His abilities are, undoubtedly, quite equal to the mechanical parts of his business as ambassador; but this is not enough. He cannot dance, drink, game, flatter, promise, dress, swear with the gentlemen, and talk small talk and flirt with the ladies; in short, he has none of the essential arts or ornaments which constitute a courtier. There are thousands, who, with a tenth part of his understanding and without a spark of his honesty, would distance him infinitely in any court in Europe. I will only add that I found many Ameri-

cans in London, whose sentiments and conduct towards him were by no means so liberal or polite as I could have wished."

But there is a curious later evidence connected with this controversy, which, though slight, is of no small interest; and I am persuaded that if John Adams had had recourse to the existing manuscript of the History of the Revolution, he would have been a little mollified in finding how hard it had been for his old friend to decide upon a just portraiture of his inner self, and how conscientiously she had tried to shade the picture in conformity with her severe ideals of accuracy and truth. There are erasures where she failed. There are softening phrases which were afterwards omitted, in condensing for the press, and which would have done much to qualify resentment. For more than one opinion in this less labored draft represents the popular judgment. When it has reached print, it stands out incisively as her own uncompromising conclusion. Those qualifying phrases are small; yet, in the face of what accompanied their omission, they are not insignificant.

From her historical page you read that "it was viewed as a kind of political phenome-

non *when discovered* that Mr. Adams's former opinions were beclouded by a partiality for monarchy." The manuscript says: "*It was thought by many* that his own political systems were beclouded by his partiality for monarchy."

Turn again to the printed page and find: "Pride of talents and much ambition were undoubtedly combined in the character of the president who immediately succeeded General Washington." The same paragraph in the manuscript begins with "Great virtues and strong passions," and though it goes on to the "pride of talents" which Mr. Adams found it so difficult to forgive, and to his "unbounded ambition," the more fortunate prelude might have softened him to bear the rest.

"It is to be charitably presumed," says the printed volume, "that the splendor of courts and courtiers may have biassed Mr. Adams's judgment into thinking an hereditary monarchy the best government for America." But the manuscript is neither so patronizing nor so dogmatic. Even from the fact of its greater length, it makes the allegation less a matter of fact than opinion. It seems there as if she would "use all gently":—

"From Mr. Adams's religious professions and his general regard to moral obligation, it is candid

to suppose that he might, by living long near the splendor of courts and courtiers, united with his own brightened prospects, have become so biassed in his judgment as to think an hereditary monarchy the best Government for his native country."

The quarrel swept on until John Adams had said that which he should not, and Mrs. Warren had retorted with what was at last a proper spirit. It is good to see, however, that her last word holds a suggestion of softness and regret: —

As an old friend, I pity you; as a Christian, I forgive you; but there must be some acknowledgment of your injurious treatment or some advances to conciliation, to which my mind is ever open, before I can again feel that respect and affection towards Mr. Adams which once existed in the bosom of

MERCY WARREN.

The controversy dropped, and for a time it seemed as if the old friendship were dead; but, like all precious things, it had in it the seeds of resurrection. The common friends of the two families would not allow it to cease; and through the mediation of Elbridge Gerry, then Governor of Massachusetts, in whom Mrs. Warren had confided, a reconciliation was firmly established. He seems to

have entered upon his hard task with great tact and impartiality; and a paragraph from his opening letter shows how sincerely he tried to look on both sides of the shield: —

"The object of Mr. Adams, as expressed in the first page of his letter of July 11th, was certainly, under the sense of injury which he afterwards expressed, consistent with the character of a gentleman of sense, honor, and reputation, and, had it been carefully pursued, would probably have committed to oblivion the letters themselves, and have terminated to the mutual satisfaction of the parties; but if he did not 'conceive resentment' and was not 'hastily changed into an enemy,' he approached so near to these points as that his best friends must allow he appeared to be in contact with them."

A frankly humorous and human incident also belongs to the little drama. A letter to Mrs. Warren from Dr. James Freeman, dated April 14, 1810, indicates that she had confided the matter to him under injunction of secrecy; and he replies in well-guarded and politic fashion, saying that he wishes "to write in such a manner, as to express that warm approbation" which he feels for her, without unduly censuring Mr. Adams. But he owns that he does not like, in writing, to say anything about a brother man which is

not at once prudent and kindly. (Evidently he adheres to the golden rule laid down by Rhoda Broughton's born flirt and jilt: "Never write! In the length and breadth of Europe," says Miss Churchill with a modest pride, "there is not a square inch of my handwriting to be obtained!") When he goes to Plymouth he will talk it over. But he had previously written the most delightfully personal letter to James Warren, Jr.: —

BOSTON, 6th May, 1808.

DEAR SIR, — Your favour of the 20th of April, owing I suppose to the new arrangements of the post-office here, I have just received. It reminds me of my neglect in not answering the very acceptable letter, which enclosed the Alphabetical Maxims. For this and all other favours I sincerely thank you & Mrs. Warren.

I am not unmindful of her injunction as to a certain gentleman. Soon after my return from Plymouth, I was closely questioned by his nephew, whether his letters to your mother had been communicated to me. I inquired, "what letters?" and was informed, "That they were very smart & very severe." At that time I gave him no direct answer: but a few days after I took an opportunity of saying to him, that I thought him a strange man; that he had asked me a question, which I could not with propriety answer in any

way; that whether ignorant or acquainted with the subject, I ought not to be pressed on it; that whenever a gentleman was admitted into the bosom of a private family, he had no right to betray its secrets, or even to intimate that he had heard anything of a secret nature. How ought I then to address a man, who asks me such questions? He answered, in a good natured manner — for he is a pleasant young man — "Tell him, that it is none of his business." I replied, "I do say to you then, Mr. S, that it is none of your business." After this, I conclude, I shall hear no more of the matter from that quarter. Whenever therefore I go again to Plymouth, I think I may be safely indulged with the perusal of the letters. I have a great curiosity to read them; and I did violence to my inclinations, when, influenced by the motive of prudence, I forbore to urge your Mother to communicate their contents.

From the moment of reconciliation the friendship ran in an unbroken course, only to be interrupted by death. Its renewal was followed by an interchange of gifts, still existing when the hearts whose affection they symbolized have fallen into dust. Their story is told in a letter written at Quincy, December 30, 1812, by Mrs. Adams to Mrs. Warren: —

"With this letter, I forward to you a token of love and friendship. I hope it will not be the less

valuable to you for combining, with a lock of my own hair, that of your ancient friend's at his request. The lock of hair with which you favored me from a head which I shall ever respect, I have placed in a handkerchief pin, set with pearl, in the same manner with the ring. I shall hold it precious."

Ring and pin are now in the possession of Winslow Warren, Esq., of Dedham. The pin is an oblong surrounded by small pearls, with Mrs. Warren's initials in the centre. The ring, a square top set with pearls in the same manner, has suffered from the lapse of time; for most of the hair has disappeared, and the letters "J. & A. A.," which were originally in gold, have turned black.

And Mrs. Warren's reply, dated January 26, 1813, begins with warmth: —

"*A token of love and friendship.* What can be more acceptable to a mind of susceptibility?

". . . I shall with pleasure wear the ring as a valuable expression of your regard; nor will it be the less valued for combining with yours a lock of hair from the venerable and patriotic head of the late President of the United States. This, being at his own request, enhances its worth in my estimation. It is an assurance that he can never forget former amities. For this I thank him. When I view this testimonial of their regard, I shall be daily reminded from whose head the locks were

shorn; friends who have been entwined to my heart by years of endearment, which, if in any degree interrupted by incalculable circumstances, the age of us all now reminds us we have more to think of than the partial interruption of sublunary friendships."

Was it well that this ancient feud should have been brought to light by publication? It seems to me eminently well, not only that the treasury of historical fact might be somewhat enriched, but because it lends us a more intimate personal acquaintance with the two contestants; for therein do we find them not the more perfect, but the more human. I am rather glad that two aged patriots could so completely lose their tempers on the brink of the grave. They had still the warmth of good red blood. On both sides the excuse was ample. John Adams's *apologia* lies in the bitter circumstances of his later life. Mrs. Warren's plea was of a different nature. Well fitted, from her personal contact with events, for vivid historical writing, she was not, either from the habit of a lifetime or the expectation of that deference due her great age, calculated to endure attack. It was a pity that she had not found herself moved to write personal reminiscence rather than reflections which must be more or less autocratic; but the bent of

her mind was ever toward abstract virtue and vice, and on that road she wore no bridle. The scathing nature of her satire (which, remember, had always been received with applause!) had educated her into a freedom of speech which was somewhat too like Lesbia's "wit refined": —

> ". . . when its points are gleaming round us,
> Who can tell if they 're designed
> To dazzle merely, or to wound us?"

And the time was yet young for balancing events which were too new in the memory for an unerring testimony. Neither Mr. Adams nor Mrs. Warren could stand off and view, with absolute wisdom in relation to results, circumstances of which they had been a living part.

X

THOUGHT AND OPINION

Had Mrs. Warren herself, according to that lifelong habit of hers, set out to draw Mrs. Warren's character, what would she have written ? Possibly something after this sort: —

"Affable without familiarity, gracious to her equals, and condescending to those whom the social order denominated her inferiors; of an heroic temper, which was nevertheless sometimes shaken by the adverse currents of a nervous organism; deeply affectionate, and yet, save in rare cases, studiously reserved. Her intellectual habit was distinguished by an extraordinary acumen in the judgment of character and an ability to portray it. She was possessed of vivacity of speech, and unvarying address in action," — but labored antithesis is not to be attained by the modern pen. What did Mrs. Warren betray herself to be after her character had crystallized into shape ? Her literary likings are not far to

seek. They conform to the highest and most rigid ideals of her time. She subscribed without qualification to the classic formula of "days and nights to the study of Addison." Pope and Dryden, with their measured moralities and even-paced rhythm, seemed to her the refinement of poetic ability and good taste. But through all her intellectual pursuits, her character marches like a soldier, ready to give blow on blow. No mere cleverness, even on her darling ground of historical writing, can blind her to a shallow estimate of things sacred. Her moral judgment is never hoodwinked by mere intellectual ability. She reads Abbé Raynal's Philosophical and Political History of the East and West Indies with a peculiar interest and approval; for were not his democratic principles exactly after her own heart? She reads Gibbon and Hume, but with more than a grain of protest. To her mind, their general conclusions were invalidated by their sceptical tenor of thought. No one, she would say, who fails to include the Great Author of the universe in his earthly scheme can justly weigh and measure events. But especially does the *furore* over Lord Chesterfield awaken her to a righteous and outspoken indignation. Briefly she would have agreed with the ruthless dictum that the

Letters teach "the morals of a prostitute and the manners of a dancing master." She has observed that infidelity is gaining ground in America, and in 1799, she writes: —

"For more than thirty years there has been reason to dread the influence of the opinions of Voltaire, de Alembert &c on the rising generation, and in more modern times I have held in equal contempt those of Hume Gibbon and Godwin. but as we hear the sacred volume is again coming into fashion through mere detestation of the French nation, I hope my countrymen will be so far Nelsonized as after the example of that gallant commander to place their bibles in their bedchamber instead of the metaphysical or atheistical trumpery imported either from France, Germany or England."

She has no tolerance for Tom Paine, democrat though he be. His writings are "blasphemous and without principle."

Her intellectual life seems never to have been broken by any periods of lassitude or dulness. Though her health might fail, her voracity for knowledge remained insatiable. Even when she was a woman of seventy, retired with her husband to an uneventful existence, she could write: "We read the newspapers on all sides and *everything else we can get.*" She is forever lingering over memoirs. These,

with history, constitute her daily food. She delights in Mrs. Chapone, whose "style is pleasing, the sentiments elegant, and the observations instructive." At Mrs. Adams's request, she reads Mrs. Seymour's Letters on Education, and they provoke from her a truly characteristic comment; for whereas Mrs. Seymour has declared that generosity of disposition is first to be awakened in a child, Mrs. Warren urges that nothing should take precedence of truth. Lay the foundation with that, and all other virtues may be built upon it.

Books and pamphlets are constantly exchanged between her and her best woman friend, accompanied by criticisms and comments on their reading. December 11, 1773, Mrs. Adams writes: —

I send with this the 1 volm of Moliere and should be glad of your opinion of them — I cannot be brought to like them, there seems to me to be a general want of spirit, at the close of every one I have felt disappointed. — there are no characters but what appear unfinished and he seems to have ridiculed vice without engageing us to Virtue — and tho he sometimes makes us laugh, yet tis a smile of indignation — there is one Negative Virtue of which he is possess'd I mean that of Decency . . . I fear I shall incur the Charge of vanity by thus criticising upon an author who has

met with so much applause — You, madam, I hope will forgive me. I should not have done it if we had not conversed about it before — your judgment will have great weight with

your sincere Friend

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

Mrs. Warren's reply is dated January 19, 1774: —

". . . . I shall return a small Folio belonging to Mr. Adams the first safe & convenient opportunity. tell him I almost regret the Curiosity that Led me to wish to Look over the pages in which Human Nature is portray d in so odious a Light as the Characters of the Borgian Family Exhibits.

" . . . as I am called upon both by M^r & M^rs Adams to give my opinion of a celebrated Comic Writer, silence in me would be inexcusable tho otherways my sentiments are of Little Consequence.

the solemn strains of the tragic Muse have been generally more to my taste than the Lighter Representations of the Drama. yet I think the Follies and Absurdities of Human Nature Exposed to Ridicule in the Masterly Manner it is done by Moliere may often have a greater tendency to reform Mankind than some graver Lessons of Morality. the observation that he Ridicules Vice without Engageing us to Virtue discovers the Veneration of my Friend for the Latter. But when Vice is held up at once in a detestable & Ridiculous Light, & the Windings of the Human Heart which Lead

to self deception unfolded it certainly points us to the path of Reason & Rectitude . . . and if Mrs. Adams will Excuse my freedom & energy I will tell her I see no Reason yet to call in question the Genius of a Moliere or the judgment of the person by whose Recommendation I read him."

One cannot but take a sly sort of delight in her attitude toward the unborn cause now heralded under the words, The Advancement of Woman. Of the organized protest of the present day, she anticipated nothing. She seems to have occupied the tranquil position of a superiority which was hers by right, and always accorded her unasked. Abigail Adams, on the contrary, did not hesitate to express her own dissatisfaction with the recognized state of things, and humorously appealed for relief to the man who could not have given her a more reverent homage had she been legally declared his equal: —

"He [Mr. Adams] is very sausy to me [she writes Mrs. Warren in 1776], in return for a List of Female Grievances which I transmitted to him. I think I will get you to join me in a petition to Congress. I thought it was very probable our Wise Statesmen would erect a New Government & form a New Code of Laws, I ventured to speak a Word in behalf of our Sex who are rather hardly Dealt with by the Laws of England which gives

such unlimited power to the Husband to use his wife Ill. I requested that our Legislators would consider our case and as all Men of Delicacy & Sentiment are averse to exercising the power they possess, yet as there is a Natural propensity in Human Nature to domination I thought the Most Generous plan was to put it out of the power of the Arbitrary & tyranick to injure us with impunity by establishing some Laws in our Favour upon just & Liberal principals.

"I believe I even threatened fomenting a Rebellion in case we were not considerd and assured him we would not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we had neither a voice nor representation.

" In return he tells me he cannot but Laugh at my Extradonary Code of Laws that he had heard their struggle had loosned the bonds of Government, that children & apprentices were disobedient, that Schools and Colledges were grown turbulent, that Indians slighted their Guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their Masters. But my letter was the first intimation that another Tribe more Numerous & powerfull than all the rest were grown discontented. this is rather too coarse a compliment, he adds, but that I am so sausy he wont blot it out.

" So I have helped the Sex abundantly, but I will tell him I have only been making trial of the disinterestedness of his Virtue & when weighd in the balance have found it wanting.

"It would be bad policy to grant us greater power say they since under all the disadvantages we labour we have the ascendancy over their hearts

'And charm by accepting, by submitting sway.'"

But though John Adams might receive such an appeal with a jest, he conceded royally to feminine powers. It was in the previous year that he had said to James Warren, after owning how inevitable it was that politics should be influenced by women: —

"But if I were of opinion that it was best for a general Rule that the fair should be excused from the arduous Cares of War and State, I should certainly think that Marcia and Portia ought to be exceptions, because I have ever ascribed to those Ladies a Share and no small one neither, — in the Conduct of our American affairs."

Mrs. Warren treads delicately the ground occupied by the modern anti-suffragist (when the latter is a woman of intelligence). She considers herself the equal, mental and moral, of the more fortunate sex; but she concludes that, for purposes of social organization and government, a technical headship is necessary. Such ascendency need not of necessity find its root in the nature of things. It merely happens that the well-being of society,

according to the Divine dispensation, demands it. She very concisely defines her "platform" to one of the young ladies who so often sought her for counsel and advice: —

". . . You seem hurt by the general aspersions so often thrown on the Understanding of ours by the Illiberal Part of the other Sex. — I think I feel no partiality on the Female Side but what arises from a love to Justice, & freely acknowledge we too often give occasion (by an Eager Pursuit of Trifles) for Reflections of this Nature. — Yet a discerning & generous Mind should look to the origin of the Error, and when that is done, I believe it will be found that the Deficiency lies not so much in the Inferior Contexture of Female Intellects as in the different Education bestow'd on the Sexes, for when the Cultivation of the Mind is neglected in Either, we see Ignorance, Stupidity, & Ferocity of Manners equally Conspicuous in both.

"It is my Opinion that that Part of the human Species who think Nature (as well as the infinitely wise & Supreme Author thereof) has given them the Superiority over the other, mistake their own Happiness when they neglect the Culture of Reason in their Daughters while they take all possible Methods of improving it in their sons.

"The Pride you feel on hearing Reflections indiscriminately Cast on the Sex, is laudable if any is so. — I take it, it is a kind of Conscious Dignity that ought rather to be cherish'd, for

while we own the Appointed Subordination (perhaps for the sake of Order in Families) let us by no Means Acknowledge such an Inferiority as would Check the Ardour of our Endeavours to equal in all Accomplishments the most masculine Heights, that when these temporary Distinctions subside we may be equally qualified to taste the full Draughts of Knowledge & Happiness prepared for the Upright of every Nation & Sex; when Virtue alone will be the Test of Rank, & the grand Œconomy for an Eternal Duration will be properly Adjusted."

There speaks the feminine wisdom of the ages: "My dear, it may be necessary for you to *seem* inferior; but you need not be so. Let them have their little game, since it may have been so willed. It won't hurt you; it will amuse them."

Of this same subtlety of worldly wisdom, though of another complexion, is the sage advice written to her son Henry's young wife soon after marriage: "Many of our thoughtless sex as soon as the connubial knot is tied neglect continual attention (which is necessary *without discovering the exertion*) to keep the sacred flame of love alive."

Note the significance of the italicized words! Mrs. Warren had learned that the woman who would reign must be mistress of an exquisite tact.

She is not to be deluded by conventional judgments, the snap-shots of criticism. In writing Mrs. Adams, she refers to their common curiosity regarding certain political letters, adding: —

"[It is] the one quality which the other sex so generously Consign over to us. Though for no other Reason but because they have the opportunity of indulging their inquisitive Humour to the utmost in the great school of the World, while we are confined to the Narrower Circle of Domestic Care. but we have yet one Advantage peculiar to ourselves. If the Mental Faculties of the Female are not improved it may be Concealed in the obscure retreats of the Bedchamber or the kitchen which she is not Necessitated to Leave."

But alas! when she speaks from the insecure morass of nervous panic her conclusions are less assured. Thus does she write in the early days of the war, after much talk of political apprehensions: —

"As our weak & timid sex is only the echo of the other, & like some pliant peace of Clock work the springs of our souls move slow or more Rapidly: just as hope, fear or courage gives motion to the conducting wires that govern all our movements, so I build much on the high key that at present seems to Animate the American patriots."

Again does she appear in the field, in outspoken championship. Her son Winslow has professed himself "enraptured" with Lord Chesterfield's Letters. This alone is sufficiently alarming to her moral sense, and she writes him a protest so scathing of the polite author that it was considered worthy a general reading, and through other hands found its way into the newspaper under the prefatory note: —

"The enclosed letter was written by a Lady born and educated in this State, Whose friends have repeatedly ventured offending her delicacy by obliging the public with some of her ingenious and elegant productions."

After criticising his lordship's morals and manners with an unblenching rigor, Mrs. Warren takes him up on this especially offensive point: —

"His Lordship's severity to the ladies only reminds me of the fable of the lion and the man: I think his trite, hackney'd, vulgar observations, the contempt he affects to pour on so fair a part of the Creation, are as much beneath the resentment of a woman of education and reflection, as derogatory to the candor and generosity of a writer of his acknowledged abilities and fame; and I believe in this age of refinement and philosophy, few men indulge a peculiar asperity with regard to the sex

in general, but such as have been unfortunate in their acquaintance, unsuccessful in their address, or sowered from repeated disappointments. Had I not made my letter so lengthy, I would add an observation or two from the celebrated Mr. Addison, who did more to the improvement of the English language and to correct the style of the age, than, perhaps, any other man."

Whatever conclusions Mrs. Warren formed were distinguished by rare strength of judgment, a sane common-sense; and these could not fail to assert themselves in this question of sex. She was impartial enough to see that tweedledum is exceedingly like tweedledee. Witness an example: When the world curled its haughty lip over Mrs. Macaulay's marriage to her callow suitor, what said Mrs. Warren? She wrote John Adams that probably Mrs. Macaulay's "independency of spirit led her to suppose she might associate for the remainder of life, with an inoffensive, obliging youth, with the same impunity a gentleman of three score and ten might marry a damsel of fifteen!"

There was always a tang in her words like that of good honest cider or the west October wind. She could not only think and feel, but most emphatically she could speak.

XI

THE BELOVED SON

In the house of Winslow Warren, Esq., at Dedham, hang three portraits which are of especial interest to one who would become in the least acquainted with Madam Mercy Warren. On entering the room, you are confronted by the lady herself, as she appears at the beginning of this book, in her attitude of well-bred calm, one hand delicately extended toward the enlivening nasturtiums of the canvas. She is dressed in a gray-blue magnificence (although the list of Copley's works does denominate it "dark-green satin!" curiously enough, a gown which appears to be the duplicate of several others in the portraits of that time), the puffs edged with a gilt embroidery, and the sleeves adorned by lace which is now in the family possession. She looks like a person of great "sensibility," absolute firmness, and an admirable amount of intelligence; nor can we subscribe to her own disparaging dictum when, in later life,

promising to send Mrs. Janet Montgomery a miniature of herself, she refers to hers as a "countenance only indifferent in the bloom of youth." Lighted by vivacity and the play of varying expression, it must have exercised great fascination of a superior sort. Her neighbor on the wall, hangs the bluff, florid yeoman, her husband, the man who could tell a good story, laugh a hearty laugh, and smile away his wife's megrims: "A good heart, Kate, is the sun and moon; or, rather, the sun, and not the moon; for it shines bright, and never changes, but keeps his course truly."

But the third picture, a remarkably fine Copley, was one of Mrs. Warren's chief treasures. It is the portrait of a young man of handsome, strongly-marked features, and an unmistakable expression of pride bordering on arrogance. His eyes almost invoke apologies. They have the indisputable air of saying, "What are you doing *dans cette galère?*" This is Winslow Warren, the son who was at once the pride and the anxiety of his mother's heart; and the picture is, according to her own words when she received it, in 1785, "a most striking likeness of a son inexpressibly dear."

From his letters, at least, he seems to have been a man of much vigor of mind, and,

according to the comments of others, well-equipped with social graces. For during a long stay abroad he evidently took the stand of a young gentleman of fortune and breeding. The pleasures of fashionable life especially appealed to him, and he was fitted by nature for ease and gayety. But however he might appear to the world, his mother valued him more than "one entire and perfect chrysolite." He was not only her cherished son, but her adviser, her friend. She referred to him on various points which might require the experience of a man of the world, submitting to him possibilities of travel for his younger brothers, and in one case sending him a copy of her tragedy, The Sack of Rome, with a request for his criticisms. And he gave them, perhaps with a freedom which none of the other sons might so boldly have used. The manuscript copy which travelled to Lisbon and back again has his intelligent but free-and-easy remarks, wherein he quarrels with some of her motives, and her unities of time and place, and, in short, treats her rather like an intellectual equal than a superior.

He spent many of the later years of his life abroad, and the pathos of the mother's yearning love was enhanced by the pain of that separation. It was not then, as now, a trifling

incident of travel to "run over" for the summer. Vessels were weeks in going, and letters were subject to the chances not only of time, but of piracy and loss. It was the nineteenth of May, 1780, when Winslow sailed, carrying, we can imagine, a freight of fond injunctions, and weighted with parental advice. His mother afterwards reminded him that they sat together before his sailing, and talked, in a time of unprecedented darkness, — a deeply solemn vigil, at least to her. This was the Dark Day so alarming to New England: the day when Colonel Abraham Davenport, of Connecticut, elected to do his "present duty," and went on with the business of legislation among the candles' "flaring lights." To one of Mrs. Warren's temperament it might have seemed ominous on the eve of a step so vital. At Newfoundland, Winslow's vessel was detained by the English; and, as his mother writes with pride, young as he was, he voluntarily pledged himself as hostage for the liberation of certain of his countrymen suffering on board the prison ship there.

However, he was very courteously treated, and allowed to continue his journey; but in England he fell under suspicion, during the next year, for keeping patriotic company. On April 28, 1781, he reports himself as "having

been arrested in London on suspicion of too intimate an acquaintance with Temple, Trumbull &c. Lord Hillsborough asked me many questions about my situation & views . . . His lordship condescended to give me a great deal of advice saying he was prepossessed in my favor from my appearance. . . . He lavished many praises on my mother's letters said 'they would do honor to the greatest writer that ever wrote' and added 'Mr. Warren I hope you will profit by her instructions & advice.' I had the honor of three private conferences with him. On the last which was the day before I left London I requested a passport from him to Ostend. He answered that the communication was free and open to every one, that he did not think it necessary, wished me a pleasant ride down & an agreeable passage over . . . After this when I arrived at Margate I was again arrested by his lordship's orders. You may easily suppose how much I was astonished at this — but I have every reason to suppose it was done in hopes of getting hold of Mr. Temple — by again seizing my papers but in this they are monstrously disappointed. Sir James Wright told me before I left it that I was watched during my whole stay in London: where I went — when I removed lodg-

ings — who accompanyed me to the house of Commons & who were my acquaintances."

But it was not long after his arrival, in July, 1780, that we find a cursory mention of an enemy of our own: —

"Everybody or *tout le monde* as the french say are attacked with the influenza which has made the tour of Europe coming from Russia & so on into Germany England Holland &c This disorder is matter of much Speculation and none can give any satisfactory account of its origin & cause — it has been fatal in many places where it has been improperly treated in the commencement."

In November of the same year Mrs. Warren had dramatic news to send him: —

"No very capital stroke has been struck on either side. . . . You will have a Narrative of the Blackned treachery of Arnold and the fall of the Brave Major Andre. — While every tongue acceded to the justice of his sentence every eye droped a tear at the Necessity of its Execution. Thus a Man capable of winning the Brightest Laurels of Glory in the field has died by the hand of the Executioner amidst the armies of America, but without one personal Enemy."

From Nantz, in 1782, he writes that he has carried about one of his mother's letters ever

since receiving it, and read it to so many Americans that he knows it by heart. "It is," he adds with emphasis, "universally acknowledged to be as good language and as just sentiment as ever were put together."

Meanwhile the Warrens had, in 1781, purchased the Governor Hutchinson house at Milton, a place which seemed thenceforth to be bound up with dreams of Winslow and plans for his coming. His mother approves his enterprise in wishing to engage in mercantile pursuits abroad. Commerce, she believes, must broaden the mind. But she would fain have him at home, or even settled abroad in some steady pursuit. One extract from a letter of his shows an amusingly different temper in mother and son. He is perpetually wishing to be at home again, either from some personal love of Milton Hill, or from the warmth with which the family describe their present home, and one day he adds jocosely that he would gladly return and live near them in a tree-shaded spot, with "a Woman whether handsome or not would be immaterial with me, — provided she had at least 5000 Guineas. I *would* live in perfect happiness. my residence in America was *hardly* long enough to find such a Girl — if you will follow the french fashion I am at your orders."

But this boldness of speech is offensive to Mrs. Warren's decorum. She carefully corrects the letter, inserts an adjective, so that the "not impossible she" figures as "an *agreeable* woman," and, carefully lining out the crass and mercenary "5000 Guineas," supplies the more temperate phrase, "a competent fortune."

In the spring of 1783, she writes him at Philadelphia, a glad, spontaneous little cry: "Is my son again on the same Continent!" and eighteen days later, after hearing that he proposes returning to Europe without coming to Milton, she breaks out in a spirit of remonstrance noticeably rare in her intercourse with him: "It cannot — it must not be!"

This year a family calamity is to be chronicled. James Otis, who had been living his quiet life at a farmhouse in Andover, was killed by lightning; and thus, in June, does Mrs. Warren write her son: —

"The great soul of this superior Man was instantaneously set free by a shaft of lightning — set free from a thraldom in which the love of his Country and of mankind had involved him. We cannot but behold with wonder & astonishment the flaming car commissioned to waft from the world one of the greatest yet most unhappy of men."

In a letter written in March, 1784, when Winslow is still planning a trip abroad, his mother wonders with much gentleness whether his continued absence from home may not be caused by his dislike of saying good-by; but the morrow is his birthday: "The birds sing sweetly — come tomorrow if you can — we will have no bidding adieu. you shall see as much heroism as you wish in Yours &c. M. Warren."

Did he come? Did she have the peace of that birthday to remember, with her handsome son at her side? Let us believe it, for it was to be followed by another long absence. Winslow, still with commercial projects on foot, went to England, France, and Portugal, and in the latter country settled at Lisbon in the hope of receiving an appointment as Consul General from the American States. He writes in very evident distaste for Lisbon. The city had had her lesson; for after her Babylonian gayety had come the earthquake, and the débris of her ruin was not yet cleared away. Doubtless he heard there the story of the handsome Englishman, Sir Harry Frankland, rescued from the crumbling city by Agnes Surriage, the unhappy maid of Marblehead; but he does not mention it. There he waits for his consular appointment, which

never comes, meanwhile leading the life of a gentleman of ease and fashion. He is excellently fitted for the consulship, for he has learned the language, and knows much of Continental life and affairs; his mother implies, with a little natural though dignified resentment, that the memory of his father's distinguished services in America might have roused certain high officials here to the necessity of advancing him. He does not lack for society. The English are very polite to him, knowing his official expectations. But, either out of compliment to his mother, or in some youthful discontent, he sighs continually for home. Mrs. Warren tells him how carefully she has followed his direction in planting certain trees at Milton; and he responds in a strain calculated to gladden her heart. He has received her letters: —

"I wish to God [he adds] I was at the Window you wrote them from. Most assuredly there is not so pleasant a one neither in France nor Flanders — nor in England or Holland — and your stables are vastly more pleasant than the Queen's palace in Lisbon."

But how did Mrs. Warren estimate modern gallantry when she read a certain letter telling how her son, with a party of friends, went

"down the river" sight-seeing? One of their attendants struck a villager, "which was resented by the whole & in a few moments we were surrounded by an hundred men beside Women & Children. — their Gallantry was our security. We sheltered ourselves behind the ladies untill an officer came and liberated us from our dangerous situation . . . But the dark assassinating disposition of this murderous people cannot well be conceived without a residence among them. A Story is related of the minister of an Asiatic Despot that never left his master's presence without feeling to see if his head was upon his Shoulders — So I never arrive in my chambers without looking around me to see if I am safe also."

Meanwhile the house at Milton, where General Warren was again in private life, had been left more desolate. George was studying law at Northampton; and in 1784 Mrs. Warren writes that Charles, warned by consumptive symptoms, had gone on a voyage in pursuit of health. A second voyage did him no permanent good; and in the spring of 1785, he arrived home again from Hispaniola, as the island of Haiti was then called. In August of that year, with a last despairing attempt to use all means for recovery, he set

sail for Europe, and died at Cadiz, alone, save for his attendant. He met with great kindness in that land of strangers and an alien belief. At the end a father of the Catholic Church offered him the consolations of that faith; but, as his mother recounts with a sorrowful pride, he refused to accept them, and died in the religion of his fathers.

Winslow's last return from Europe was in the spring of 1791; and instead of going to the warm home-corner in Milton, he was detained in Boston (through some personal difficulties, it would seem), and there he was compelled to linger, while his mother's heart must have been wrung with an almost unbearable poignancy of pain. Her letters, though written with a careful self-restraint, are almost too intimate, too sacred, to be quoted. She still preserves toward him that patient obedience to his desires which is so pathetic from a mother to the son who has once lain in her arms. Her own prayer is to make nothing harder for him. She wishes, of course, to fly to him; but since he prefers her to remain at home and keep a bold front, she will obey. At this time her husband proposes her giving a dinner to certain of his associates, and she admits the policy of thus preserving the dignity and decorum of life, though her head may

have been brought in sorrow to the dust. One can imagine the brave lady sitting through that dinner, composed and smiling, with the fox gnawing at her heart. But by dint of much exertion, Winslow's affairs were arranged, and he joined St. Clair's forces organized for the suppression of the Indian troubles in the West, setting off hastily, no doubt, — for he did not see his mother before he went. Her spirit was never broken, but it had by this time become subdued and chastened, and the patience breathing through her letters comes touchingly from one so proud and firm. She loses heart for her literary work, and faith in its success. On the tenth of June she writes Winslow: —

"It is my wish, if there is any value in my printed volume [the Poems] to bequeath the copyright solely to your use. I have nothing else I can so properly call my own."

That which is most truly her own must belong to him; the others are tenderly loved, but he is a part of her very self. Then, suddenly, terribly, came the final blow. Winslow was killed, November 4, 1791, at Miami, in St. Clair's defeat. Thereafter little dismal circumstances came dropping in to irritate her wound. She was eager to receive his trunk, and, after long delay, it appeared; but it had

been several times opened on the way, and was found to contain nothing of value. She had hoped for something intimate, personal, like a message from his hand; but the tragedy was to be consistent to the end, — silence and parting. A year after, in language as true as simple, she wrote of his death that it was "a wound too deep for philosophy to palliate or the hand of time ever to heal." One little treasure which had been near him she did possess. His brother George had inherited Winslow's watch, and he loaned it to his mother for life.

In November of 1791 Henry married Mary Winslow, daughter of Pelham Winslow, and settled at Clifford. But Mrs. Warren was to have only two sons near her in old age, for George, on the completion of his studies, went to Maine, and there not only practised law, but became an ardent agriculturist (inheritor of his father's tastes), a politician, and a land-owner. Indeed, he bought land until both father and mother wondered over the wisdom of such accumulation. No one could take Winslow's place in the mother's heart, but I fancy it is easy to find in her letters to George a peculiar warmth and intimacy, the more pronounced when he developed what proved to be a mortal illness.

In 1800, his father is also ailing, and neither he nor the two other sons can undertake that long journey through the drifted Maine snows, conscious though they are that George has abandoned all hope of recovery. Mrs. Warren's letters then become very yearning and tender. She assures her son again and again of their affection for him. The need of expression grows with his weakness. They love him; they long to be with him. It is only the hard circumstances of illness and rough weather which prevent. This is a good and thoughtful son, one after her own heart, who had been, as she said of her dearer child, educated "according to the tenets of Greek patriotism and Roman virtue, with Christian precepts." They exchange criticisms and comments on the Book of Job, and George, ever a good citizen, consults her as to the principles of government. He confides to her the status of his beloved new town, Winslow, and in connection with his desire to establish there a church of the most liberal principles, grave counsel falls from her lips. She owns her reverence for breadth of belief, but urges him not to fall on the other side. She bids him remember that "there are bigots to liberality as well as to superstition."

One amusing instance of the difference

between her and General Warren in their manner of regarding old age appears in this correspondence. Throughout George's life in Maine he has the strongest desire to induce his father to visit him; but the good patriot-farmer has reached the point where it is easier to stay by his own hearth. Even when he is temporarily forsaken by the gout, and thus in good health, he still defers and hesitates. Mrs. Warren, on the contrary, not only urges her husband to go, but would even set forth herself, if he and the other sons would consent. They think the weather too rigorous, the journey too hard for her years; but she has no doubt, so she boldly announces, that she could bear it very well, and that it would do her good. There was no growing old for her, not even when she had to record long and frequent illnesses, and confinement to her elbow-chair. She had a spirit indomitably young.

The bulletins from Maine grew sadder and more sad. The waiting family were placed in that terrible position of an enforced and idle patience. George wants for nothing. His mother has not even the pleasure of finding it necessary to send him little delicacies, for he can find them there. He has friends. He has everything save the personal tendance

of his own kin. Then comes the news that he has died, as his mother writes, "an example of Christian fortitude." The Warrens, like the Stuarts, could die like gentlemen.

March 23, 1800, Mrs. Warren writes from Plymouth to her brother, Samuel Allyne Otis, at Philadelphia: —

"Rightly my dear brother have you denominated me your *afflicted sister.* the waves have rolled in upon me — the billows have repeatedly broken over me: yet I am not sunk down. . . . I have been broken by sickness bent down by sorrow, yet here I stand — and may I stand cheerfully humbly and gratefully rejoicing in the present existence so long as I can in any degree be useful to my diminished circle of domestic friends."

It is not difficult to guess at the character of young Winslow Warren, for his letters abundantly illuminate it; but as to the others, there is less basis for speculation. Mrs. Warren had written Mrs. Adams in 1785 that George was a "very dilligent student;" that Henry was "not too gay," and that he and Charles, as soon as the health of the latter would permit, wished to take the "mansion and stores" at Plymouth, and go into business together. But that was never to be. One deliciously priggish bit of epistolary litera-

ture remains to the memory of these two brothers, a relic of their college days. In 1780 Charles had written his father from Cambridge: —

"We make progress in Literature. We are both studious and sober — seldom surly, often Sentimental, kind, affable, gentle & generous to each other, & harmless as Doves, — we enter deep enough in Study for the improvement of our minds, — and deep enough in amusements (and believe me Sir no deeper than) for the advantage of our bodies."

Is this written in a Rollo-esque sincerity, or did the scribe read it aloud with a wicked roll of the eye for his brother's delectation? For even college lads were not an absolutely different species a hundred years ago.

XII

ON MILTON HILL

To return to one definite phase of personal history is to find that the step accomplished by the Warrens in 1781 had been earnestly debated in family council. This was the purchase of the Governor Hutchinson house at Milton; and it was a venture which might have been regarded as not altogether wise, since the father and mother were no longer young, and by no means in the best worldly circumstances. The bargain was concluded, not without serious misgivings of their own, for the reduction of their fortune was no mere figure of speech. They could only pay for their new plaything by the exercise of strict economy, as General Warren implied in writing his son Winslow, who had not been long abroad: —

" . . . Were I not pushed to pay for this Farm I should forward you some Bills, but as matters are it is out of my power. every resource must be Employed for that purpose and barely sufficient will they all prove for payments now due. for you are to consider I can sell nothing at Plymouth."

There is a strange dramatic interest in the fact that the house of the detested Hutchinson should have come into the hands of two patriots who regarded him with cordial abomination, and one of whom had affixed a lasting stigma to his name. It had as picturesque a history as that of any old house in the Province. It was in the happiest possible situation, and Governor Hutchinson had not found it necessary to embroider, when, in conversation with George III., 1774, recounted in his Diary and Letters, he said: —

"My house is seven or eight miles from town, a pleasant situation, and many gentlemen from abroad say it has the finest prospect from it they ever saw, except where great improvements have been made by art, to help the natural view."

It had indeed a rich and lovely outlook. Only far enough away to lie bathed in the bloom of distance lay the blue hills of Milton. Facing the house was a dream-landscape of delight: sweet meadows dressed in green, or the soft russet of the yellowing year, where the Neponset River winds and lingers; and still beyond, Boston Harbor, with its twinkling lights at night and sunlit brilliance by day. To the left lay the sleeping city, far enough away to intensify the peace ever

crowning the hill; and plumy trees and haze-clad greenery softened and allured between. This was Neponset (in the beginning, the Indian Unquity), and with the first half of the eighteenth century it rose rapidly in social importance. The eyes of the prosperous and the officially great were attracted to it from its promise of peace and the ever-present witchery of beauty; and among them was Thomas Hutchinson, who, in 1743, built the house afterwards to pass into the hands of James Warren. He builded well and on good old models tested by time. Says the author of The Governor's Garden: —

"The house stood about a quarter of a mile from the wooden bridge crossing the Neponset River, set well back from the Braintree road. The frame was of English white oak, so solid that what remains of it to-day scarcely feels the sharp edge of the carpenters' tools. The plan was a simple one, but the unrivalled scenery of hill, river and ocean lent it a special charm. The walls were fully a foot thick, and packed with seaweed to keep off the cold in winter, and the heat in summer. [It was] a long low structure with pitched roof and gable ends; . . . In its east end were the coach-house and stables; beyond, the quarters for cattle and swine, and haylofts above. To the west of this was the farm-house and outlying buildings."

Society was born on Milton Hill and flourished there; and no one was better fitted to give it tone and flavor than he who, as Governor of the Province, was destined to be rejected by the people. There were gay doings then at Milton, as well as in the fine mansions of Boston town. Even the memoranda relative to the Governor's "cloaths" are enough to paint a picture of the stately scene wherein he figured, bravely arrayed. Like all the proper men of his day (critical because they had some liberty of choice beyond our rigorous black and white!), he was thoughtful and even exacting over his wardrobe. One oft-quoted extract shows him at his best in this mood of deliberation over such vital minutiæ. On October 5, 1769, after his elevation to the chief magistracy, he sends to London for appropriate furbishing: —

To Mr. Peter Leitch:

I desire to have you send me a blue cloth waistcoat trimmed with the same color, lined, the skirts and facings, with effigeen, and the body linnen to match the last blue cloath I had from you: — two under waistcoats or camisols of warm swansdown, without sleeves, faced with some cheap silk or shagg. A suit of cloaths full-trimmed, the cloath some thing like the enclosed, only more of a gray mixture, gold button and hole, but little wadding

lined with effigeen. I like a wrought, or flowered, or embroidered hole, something though not exactly like the hole upon the cloaths of which the pattern is enclosed; or if frogs are worn, I think they look well on the coat; but if it be quite irregular, I would have neither one or the other, but such a hole and button as are worn. I know a laced coat is more the mode, but this is too gay for me. A pair of worsted breeches to match the color, and a pair of black velvet breeches, the breeches with leather linings. Let them come by the first ship. P. S. If there be no opportunity before February, omit the camisols, and send a green waistcoat, the forebodies a strong corded silk, — not the *cor du soie,* but looks something like it, — the sleeves and bodies sagathee or other thin stuff, body lined with linen, skirts silk. My last cloaths were rather small in the arm-holes, but the alterations must be very little, next to nothing.

Again, in 1773, his wardrobe needs a further replenishing: —

"I desire you to send me by the first opportunity a suit of scarlet broad-cloth, full trimmed but with few folds, and shalloon lining in the body of the coat and facing, the body of the waistcoat linen, and the breeches lining leather, plain mohair button-hole; also, a cloth frock with waistcoat and breeches, not a pure white but next to it, upon the yellow rather than blue, — I mean a color which has been much worn of late, button-holes and lin-

ing the same, the coat to have a small rolling cape or collar. — Also, a surtout of light shag or beaver, such color as is most in fashion: a velvet cape gives a little life to it. . . . Write me whether any sort of garment of the fashion of velvet coats, to wear over all, which were common some years ago, are now worn, and whether of cloth, and what color and trimmings. I should not chuse velvet."

One would fain have seen the personable Governor in his scarlet broadcloth "full-trimmed," or his surtout of the fashionable color, walking, stately and gracious, down Milton Hill, exchanging an affable word with his neighbors. So fond is he of that where-with he is clothed, that one feels a regretful pang over his rare self-denial. One would fain have assured him that the laced coat of the prevailing mode was not in the least too gay. Surely the Governor could have carried it off! But if his buttonholes turned out irreproachable, doubtless that was an abiding comfort, — all the mere human satisfaction one could expect in a fleeting world.

An accomplished scholar and a gentleman, at one time universally trusted and beloved, Governor Hutchinson had the tastes of the country squire; and these he indulged at Milton, where he was far enough from the turmoil of office to become forgetful of it, save

in those great exigencies when it clamored after him and pursued his track. He dearly loved the good brown earth, and it was his pleasure to experiment with fruits, to set out trees, budding and grafting them with his own hand. A row of sycamores on either side of the street leading over Milton Hill were the Governor's gift, planted not alone by his will, but partially through his personal effort. For, says tradition, he worked among the laborers deputed to the task, wielding his spade with the best. The trees (all but one survivor) have died out within the present century; but substitutes have, through the care of good citizenship, replaced them. Thomas Hutchinson was also a good citizen, a public-spirited and generous man. The highway over Milton Hill was a narrow thoroughfare until he gave a strip from his own estate to turn it into that imposing highway of which Milton is justly proud He was on excellent terms with his neighbors until public disturbances rose to spoil domestic peace; and he spent many of his few tranquil days among them, mingling in the village life, sometimes attending the local church, and again driving into Boston to King's Chapel, his chosen place of worship. Milton's History quotes a bit of remembered tradition pointing to the fact that the Governor

was very humanly regarded by his townsmen, and that he could even be chaffed upon occasion: —

"One pleasant Sabbath afternoon, as he was returning in his carriage [from King's Chapel], he found himself stopped by the village tithingman with his long black wand. The tithingman was an Irishman of wit, and some standing in society, who had been elected as a joke. He accosted the Governor:

"'Your Excellence, it is my business when people travel on the Sabbath to know where they have been and where they are going.' To this the Governor replied:

"'Friend Smith, I have been to Boston, and attended my own church both parts of the day, and have heard two very fine sermons.' To this Smith responded, 'Faith, sir, the best thing you can do is to go home and make a good use of them!' And the Governor drove on."

Hutchinson was on Neponset Hill (for this was the name used by these earlier residents interchangeably with Milton and Milton Hill) when the Bostonians gave their famous Tea Party, a festivity to which he was not invited. His own account of it to the Earl of Dartmouth sufficiently shows his trouble of mind, his fatuous inflexibility. The despatch was dated December 17, 1773: —

"my Lord, the owner of the ship Dartmouth, which arrived with the first teas, having been repeatedly called upon by what are called the Committee of Correspondence to send the ship to sea, and refusing, a meeting of the people was called and the owner required to demand a clearance from the custom-house, which was refused,— and then a permit from the naval officer to pass the Castle, which was also refused;— after which he was required to apply to me for the permit; and yesterday, towards evening, came to me at Milton, and I soon satisfied him that no such permit would be granted until the vessel was regularly cleared. He returned to town after dark in the evening, and reported to the meeting the answer I had given him. Immediately thereupon numbers of the people cried out, 'A Mob! a Mob!' left the house, repaired to the wharf, where three of the vessels lay aground, having on board three hundred and forty chests of tea, and in two hours' time it was wholly destroyed. The other vessel, Captain Loring, was cast ashore on the back of Cape Cod in a storm, and I am informed the tea is landed upon the beach, and there is reason to fear what has been the fate of it. I sent expresses this morning before sunrise to summon a Council to meet me at Boston, but by reason of the indisposition of three of them I could not make a quorum. I have ordered new summons this afternoon, for the Council to meet me at Milton tomorrow morning. What influence this violence and outrage may have I cannot determine."

He was terribly moved with anxiety and uncertainty of the proper course to take; for most of all did he wish to prevent any reckless deed (involving a "promise to pay" in the form of subsequent action), either on his own part or that of the angry citizens.

His days were not to be long in the land he so tenderly loved. A civilian was scarcely, at this juncture, suited to the cares of state. On May 13, 1774, General Gage arrived to take his place; and on the first of June in that year the hated Hutchinson left his Milton manor for what, he believed, would be but a temporary absence in England. Milton could never have been lovelier than in that month when he departed from her forever. She was clothed in the new green of the year, and jocund in fairness. All the "tender nurslings" of his garden smiled up to bid him an unconscious farewell. But possibly his mood at parting was not irretrievably heavy, because he could hug to his heart the prospect of return. Had some prophetic instinct suggested to him the certainty of an unending exile, had some voice whispered,

"All these things forever — forever — thou must leave,"

there would have been in his soul the bitterness of death. He walked down the Hill bid-

ding his neighbors on the right and left a dignified farewell. They could not but honor him in his capacity of private citizen; and even those who had learned the prevalent distrust may have been awed and hushed for the moment by the fulfilment of their desires. He entered his coach, and was driven to Dorchester Point, whence he was rowed over to the island of Castle William (now Fort Independence), and thence he set sail. But if those who hated him, believing him to be the arch-enemy of liberty, could have guessed how fondly his after-thoughts returned to the land of his birth, they would have owned that his punishment for what they considered wilful treachery was up to the measure of his deserts. He loved America. Ever in England did his mind turn fondly back to her, and it was Milton for which he longed. He wrote his son that he had "shipped for his Milton garden a parcel of cuttings of much finer gooseberries than he ever saw in New England." He expressed his anxiety about the pear orchard, and gave orders to have the "stocks that failed last year re-grafted." "I can," he said, "with good proof assure you that I had rather live at Milton than at Kew." After visiting Lord Hardwick's house, Wimpole Hall, he exclaimed, "This is high life,

but I would not have parted with my humble cottage at Milton for the sake of it."

When he took his departure, a large mass of manuscript was left behind. He was a man of great method, and had carefully preserved documents, both important and unimportant, in his letter-books. These, when the tea-mobs threatened him, he carried to Milton; and, as he owned, it did not come into his head where he had put them. The house had been left in charge of the gardener, and it was not until after April 19, 1775, that the authorities wakened to the necessity of taking possession of it; and meantime it had been entered, and many articles carried away. Tradition says that the letter-books were originally found in the sacking of beds; and they were ultimately bought by the State for fifty pounds, on the chance of their containing important evidence. The entire correspondence is now in the possession of the Massachusetts Archives in the office of the Secretary of State.

When Governor Hutchinson said pathetically, "New England is wrote upon my heart in as strong characters as 'Calais' was upon Queen Mary's," he expressed an affection not in the least surprising. Neponset Hill was a spot to be beloved, and the Warrens loved it no less than he. After he left the country, the

estate passed into the hands of a merchant, Samuel Broome, of whom James Warren bought it. It is a very pretty letter which Mrs. Warren writes her husband in regard to the purchase. She is evidently a little shy as to the responsibilities of the step, but all eagerness for him to have his heart's desire. And she closes the letter with a burst of affection which for once forces her quite outside her shell of decorous reserve. First of all, he must not, on any account, regret the step he has taken, unwise though it may seem: —

What sort of a Mistress I shall make at the head of a family of Husbandmen & Dairymaids I know not but your inclination shall be my Care. I beg you would not be anxious about paying for the place if you have really made your bargain. I don't doubt we shall get through that by & by. . . . I know no place within twenty miles of Boston I like so well. Indeed I think there cannot be a pleasanter spot & if Life is spared us I do not believe you or I shall regret the purchase. . . . believe I am very Happy with a flock of Dear Children about me who seem always pleased to see me so.

I hope I never shall be unmindful of the full Cup of Blessings showered on our heads.

But in a kind & faithful friend is doubled all my store —

I am his gratful affectionate fond tender Cheerful Careful Dutiful Wife

M. WARREN.

Let me insist upon it you
do not Lie awake pospone
your Calculations and your Cares till
you return. I will help you make the
one & Dissipate the other.

Thus the father writes to Winslow, who has been a year abroad: —

BOSTON June 3, 1781.

MY DEAR WINSLOW, — I came to Town two days ago with your Mamah & Brother George having left Plymouth for the present to reside at Milton upon the Farm that was Governor Hutchinson's which I purchased last Winter of Mr. Broome as I have wrote you in a former Letter. our Furniture is on the Water & I hope will be up Tomorrow. When you return shall be happy to see you at our new habitation. This remove is thought by some an Extraordinary Step at our Time of Life, is applauded by some & thought by others to be wrong, but if you have not altered your Mind is an Event that falls within your Taste.

Again he writes: —

BOSTON September 28, 1781.

. . . I am now on Milton Hill. the place is pleasant. I could enjoy it if it was paid for, but you know I hate to be in Debt. I struck a Bold

Stroke when I Bo't it. I gave a great Sum for it but should have done well enough if there had not been such a revolution in the Currency . . . but I will struggle to keep it, it is too sweet a place to part with. wont you send me soon handsome papers for two Lodging rooms each side of the Hall & for two Entries.

During the winter and spring before the removal, Mrs. Warren had been very ill, "having an Immoderate Humour settled in her Eyes which . . . deprived her of the pleasures of reading and writing for several months & . . . Impaired her Health in other respects." It was reasonable to hope that she would benefit from the change, and the family expected a summer of great happiness on Neponset Hill. It was broken, however, by the illness of the eldest son. James Warren, Jr., was an officer on board the Alliance during her foreign cruise in company with the French allies, and in her engagement with the Serapis, 1779, he was wounded in the right knee. He came home to suffer long and grievously. His leg was amputated, but the shock and nervous strain had told upon his constitution, and he was never thereafter the same man.

The wearing anxiety connected with the failing health of Mrs. Warren's family had now

fairly begun. Her son Charles had for some time been a constant sufferer, and it was not until the autumn of 1782 that he pronounced himself better, saying that his vigor was returning, and that comparative comfort did not seem then, as it had formerly, only a lull between paroxysms of pain. But this was not to last. As we have seen, life became for him a weary pursuit of health, only to be terminated by his death in 1785.

But at Milton, General Warren, freed from the more active cares of state, was beginning to indulge his lifelong dream of agriculture. That had never left him; and even in this, his later life, he expressed a wish that he might go abroad to study the state of the science there. They had been three years at Milton when Mrs. Warren writes Winslow: "Your good father is Determined to Beautify & Adorn his delightful Villa." She adds in a postscript: "The Carpet is very much admired — I think it the handsomest of the kind I ever saw. I send you the Dimensions of one for the Red Room." This is one of her sparing allusions to the goods of this world, more refreshing than bread-fruit to the starving traveller.

It is to be hoped that Winslow's taste was to be trusted, for he seems to have taken with

enthusiasm to the filling of orders. "I have," he writes, "a fine Blue Paper with an Elegant Festoon which will be very handsome for yr Hall."

These later years of General Warren's life were almost devoid of public cares and duties; but they were to be full of reminiscence of a praiseworthy activity. He had been Commissioner of the Navy Board, and after the Constitution was formed, was many years Speaker of the House of Representatives. In 1780, he was elected Lieutenant-Governor under Hancock, but refused to serve; and, indeed, declined other important offices. At the close of the war he had virtually retired, although he did accept a seat at the Council Board, and, as the last act of his official life, became a presidential elector and threw his vote for Jefferson. But leisure had come at last.

The daily life in the midst of this wealth of beauty was full of moments ministering to peace; and Mrs. Warren, when her eyes would permit, occupied much of her leisure in literary work. Yet, according to the habit of humankind, she did sometimes cast backward a regretful glance at the turmoil of the past. She sighed for Plymouth, where she had been lonely and not too well content. In an undated

letter from Milton she refers to the tranquillity of her days, adding: —

"Yet I often look back upon Plimouth, take a walk from room to room, peep through the Lattices that have lighted my steps, revisit the little Alcove leading to the Garden and place myself in every happy corner of a house where I have tasted so much real felicity. — I climb to the top of my favorite Trees and from their lofty summit take a view of the water prospect which exhibits a kind of majestick Grandeur: . . . The shady walks, the pleasant Groves that adorn this little Villa are extremely pleasing, and when the Eye is wearied with the bolder view exhibited from the Portico, the delightful landscape from the parlour windows & the warm influences & beautiful aspect of the western Sky lead me to give a temporary preference to Milton."

But slightly to anticipate the course of the years is to find that the Warrens gave up the place, after a ten years' residence, and went back to Plymouth. They were probably induced to do so by still straitened circumstances, and possibly by the course of Winslow's life. He was living abroad, and from a thread of suggestion running through his mother's letters, it seems evident that she had intended the place for him; that she had either hoped he would at some time come back and make

his home with them, or that he would begin there a new life for himself. But he showed no sign of settling, and they relinquished care and expense by withdrawing to their old "habitation." The place was sold in different lots. Thereafter it passed into various hands, but it seemed always to atttract to itself the romantic and unusual. A time of prodigal living had riot there. Madam Haley, the sister of John Wilkes and widow of a rich London merchant, had come to America to look after her husband's property. Here she married her steward, Patrick Jeffrey. Madam Haley was an eccentric character, who aimed at making an impression on the times. She lived in great magnificence. When Charlestown bridge was opened, she paid, as tradition says, five hundred dollars for the privilege of being the first to drive over it, and headed the procession, drawn by four white horses. The story goes that a countryman once called at her Boston house, and having been accorded the privilege of seeing her, owned that he came from curiosity, having heard so much about her. Thereupon Madam Haley asked what he might have heard.

"That you were so rich," he returned with admirable bluntness, "that you live in such style, do so much good, and are so homely."

"Now you see me," said the lady, "what do you think about it?"

The man must have been a mirror of candor. Said he: "I swear I believe it's all true!"

Finding her marriage uncongenial, the lady returned to England, and Jeffrey lived a gay life in the Hutchinson house. He was in possession of all the furniture, plate, and ornaments which had belonged to the first husband when alderman and mayor of London; and, with a retinue of servants at his command, he entertained magnificently. A club of men dined with him every week; and after the good talk and good wines, the guests took their leave and were driven to the front door, where they sat in their carriages, while the host, bareheaded, pledged them in one glass more. After his death, the splendid and curious furnishings of the house were sold at auction, and Milton held a three days' carnival in the purchase of bric-à-brac.

What is left of the Hutchinson-Warren estate is to-day a goodly spot. Perhaps no part of it has suffered less change than the fair prospect of meadow, river, and sea, spread out below its gates; yet that, too, is only in a measure the same, for Boston has grown beyond belief, and looms large in the distance,

and many inventions of an increasing population have worked their will upon the earth. But the marshy meadows are untouched in sweetness, and the Neponset winds happily to its home. The harbor lies serenely under fleeting sails, and at night, as if for beauty only, the lights spring out and glimmer there. The scene, when the eye first rests upon it, has an instant and appealing loveliness. Whoever may henceforth own the estate is destined always to possess more than the freehold in his name; he feeds daily in a limitless kingdom of delight.

The place itself is rich in suggestions of its former honorable days. The old farmhouse lives remodelled into modern guise; but the ample stables are almost unaltered, save for sheathing here and there, a new partition, or some slight detail of comfort. Practically they are the same as when the horses of a century-old life ate their grain within the stalls and pranced forth to give Mistress Hutchinson or Mercy Warren the air. The beams of the roof look as if they were calculated to "last till doomsday," and thickly studding the framework are valiant hand-wrought nails.

But the old manor-house is gone, pulled down some quarter-century ago. The owner

of that day, from whom the present residents have inherited it, coming home from the East and desiring to build him "more stately mansions," had the roof taken off, to be raised a story; and at that fatal stage the builder declared that it was attacked by dry-rot, and could not be returned.

But the new house stands on the same spot, and even the arrangement of its lower rooms is relatively the same. Within those modern walls lie abundant relics of the past. Governor Hutchinson's period is there in a carven mirror and table; Madam Haley's, in a sofa and chairs. But the one fragrant souvenir of all lies without: that is the Governor's garden, a living memory of old days, kept as nearly as possible as it was when he left it, and as it lived through the Warrens' time. There are the pleached alleys, two of them green-sodded, and one covered with the desecrating gravel of a later use. Straight down from the house they lead, the middle one through the lofty colonnade of a grape arbor, thick with vines and jewelled by clinging fruit. The trees scarcely meet over the alleys as in their younger days, for even nature fails with time; but everywhere still is there a multitude of leaf, and the protecting symmetry of branches, — the soft, blue-green of a plumy

pine, the ancient chestnut strewing the ground with tassels, and the shagbarks to which the place owes now its name. Everything is allowed, under the liberty of a protecting reign, to follow the errant will of its nature. The box border has grown into a hedge, and every old-fashioned flower that blows is welcome to set foot and flourish there. In spring the air is sweet with narcissus and matted lilies of the valley; in autumn it flares out in a glory of yellow. There are columbines, marigolds, flaunting coreopsis, and hardy English foxgloves. "Every flower that sad embroidery wears," and all the gayer ladies of the border, have agreed to make their bower here. It is, in New England eyes, a spot almost as moving as Shakespeare's garden. Below, at the end of the alleys, runs transversely the ha-ha, or sunk fence; and beyond, lying deliciously below the eye, is the wild garden where fragrance and color riot together and drench the summer air. Still farther on, at the outermost bounds of the garden, stand lofty trees, shutting it from the street and keeping the noise and dust of the bustling world from entering that green shade.

I love to think of Governor Hutchinson walking in stately fashion up and down the paths, giving his workmen the knowing direc-

tions of a practical farmer, and of Madam Warren in her day, with jingling keys at her side, taking a turn as soon as the dew was off the grass, picking a mulberry from the tree with dainty fingers, and speculating on the peas for her hearty "companion's" dinner. Perhaps there was some righteous joy in plucking the gooseberries and currants set out by the recreant Governor. But no! private resentment must have lain somewhat in abeyance, for the Governor was dead, and that account was closed. Save in the interest of what seemed to her historical accuracy, she would think no ill of him; and treading the paths he had ordered, one can fancy how she would repeat to herself the substance of that qualifying passage in her History whereby she vouchsafes his hated character a thin regilding: —

"He was educated in reverential ideas of monarchic government, and considered himself the servant of a king who had entrusted him with very high authority. As a true disciple of passive obedience, he might think himself bound to promote the designs of his master, and thus he might probably release his conscience from the obligation to aid his countrymen in their opposition to the encroachments of the crown. In the eye of candor, he may therefore be much more excusable than any

who may deviate from their principles and professions of republicanism, who have not been biassed by the patronage of kings, nor influenced in favor of monarchy by their early prejudices of education or employment."

XIII

TERMINUS

But it was time "to take in sail." The days had come when, save for a rare grace and courage, these two aged patriots might have said, "There is 'no pleasure in them.'" Mrs. Warren had long been troubled by the baffling "humour" in her eyes, and all through these later years her letters are in the hand of an amanuensis. General Warren loves his fireside, and his peaceful drives to Clifford, where Henry and his wife are living. He has really grown old; and some of his letters written at this period of retirement from active life are pathetic indeed, for they are by a hand so trembling as scarcely to have been able to guide the pen. His singularly affectionate and lovable nature blossoms out, during the leisure of these later years, when the cares of state have fallen away. It is good to read about his agricultural delights; to catch his spirit of joy in growing things. Nothing is too small for

him to chronicle. He writes Henry, June 5, 1794, of a visit to Clifford, where he found the farm life thriving. There are all the old homely items beloved from year to year by those born for country cares. Polly, the wife, was "much Engaged in her dairy." He would have been there again next day had the weather permitted. And he continues in a whimsical paragraph on the moral aspect of the time: —

"I have begun to think this world a farce, & a Ludicrous one too. Principles are talked of that never operate & Pretensions made that have no Effect. had I the pen of Tacitus, the satirical genius of Churchill or the descriptive powers of Anacharsis I would make an effort. I would attempt to describe the present Times & to Compare them with 1775. I would Contrast the Energy virtue & wisdom of the last with the imbecility of the first. but alas! the subject is too extensive the Contrast is too great. the Gulf is too deep."

Here, too, is a bit from an old man's love-letter, not the less honeyed for dealing in beef and bacon. It is from James Warren to Mercy, who was visiting in Boston, June 28, 1790: —

" . . . Here the weather is fine & all nature in Bloom. I long to pluck a rose & gather a plate of

strawberries for my litle angel but the distance is too great. I must be content to hope she is happy without the varigated country beauties of this very fine season which I long to describe but dare not attempt till you send me your poetick mantle . . . if I had a better foot I should have had a fine ramble but that is more than I Expect this summer. the Gout is a dreadful thing indeed for a Farmer. I wish we could confine it to the lazy citizens. Will you run over & take part of a fine piece of Beef & Bacon & a most excellent Line of Veal no green pease but potatoes, sallad & horse radish. if we had peas or rubies & diamonds we would give them to you. we have strawberries & cream at your service. . . . adieu, for why should I attempt to express the full of my affection for you."

Again he writes to Henry, January 9, 1799:—

" . . . I did hope my short span of Life would enable me to see the downfall of Kings & Conquerors till none remained to curse mankind with their ambition, avarice & destruction. The French seem to me to be marked out by Providence to effect it. I have therefore wished them success. They committed an Error in the Egyptian Expedition. Buonaparte if in Europe would soon prostrate Austrian, Russian & Turkish Tyranny, but Providence don't want means to form another Buonaparte & I presume will do it."

One of his letters to Henry deserves quoting, if only from its delightful play of humor. A son has been born to the household: —

Plym^{o} Jan 22, 1795.

Dear Henry, — I told you in my last that your son was a very pretty fellow & I told you right they say who have seen him which I have not yet done. but he has come among us with ominous presages. The Elements have been in an uproar from the day of his birth to this Moment. Storms Tempests hurricanes Snows frosts Shipwrecks &c have filled up the whole space of his Existence and while you at Boston would suppose your Mamah making visits at Clifford our roads there have been impassible but to foot travellers & with difficulty to a Horse & there is yet no approaching his Illustrious Majesty but through a storm of rain over head & snow banks underfoot. is it not natural to Enquire what all this indicates & to apprehend that if at this time of day he makes such a racket in the physical world he may when he arrives at the size & magnitude of his Papah disturb the moral & political world? become an Enthusiast in religion or an aristocrat in politics: in short the auspices denounce him as a turbulent & dangerous fellow. What then shall be done with him? Shall we abandon him or heave him into the river. Many Nations of antiquity would choose the first and some Moderns the last. you must choose for yourself.

The close of the Revolution was not for America the end of a drama, after which, the curtain having fallen on a grand *finale*, the audience might go home to sleep. She had to struggle with new questions, none the less harassing than those which had been definitely solved; she had to formulate her course. Mercy Warren writes: —

"Thus, after the conclusion of peace, and the acknowledgment of the independence of the United States by Great Britain, the situation of America appeared similar to that of a young heir, who had prematurely become possessed of a rich inheritance, while his inexperience and his new felt independence had intoxicated him so far, as to render him incapable of weighing the intrinsic value of his estate, and had left him without discretion or judgment to improve it to the best advantage of his family."

Problems confronted the new republic on every side. A large army was to be disbanded and turned loose upon the country; the treasury was depleted, real estate had depreciated, and the formation of the Constitution divided friends and families. Moreover, the patriot who had risked all for his country was quite likely to find in the altered hue of affairs something which seemed to him vastly like ingratitude on the part of those for whom he

had toiled. James and Mercy Warren were among those who felt that blow in all its heaviness. They were locally very much alone in their position of anti-Federalism, and their neighbors at Plymouth gave them the cold shoulder. This rouses Mrs. Warren to an outspoken bitterness of feeling. All the ills of her own life she might be able to bear; but when injustice touches the man on whom she bestows an increasing affection, and who, she is persuaded, has helped America to a dearly bought peace, she speaks hotly and to the point. In November, 1792, she writes her son James, then at Hingham: —

"When you feel a little vexed that your father has lost his popularity — remember that he retains his integrity, that neither his public or private virtue has ever been shaken nor does malice itself impeach his probity. His political opinions have differed from the intriguing and the fortunate, and he has had too much sincerity to conceal them — for this he has suffered — these are the sour grapes for which the Children's teeth have been set on edge."

She has learned to expect nothing from the recognition of a nation. In 1785, John Adams had written her at Milton, "When shall I again see my friend Warren in public

life?" And she had responded with some bitterness, "I answer when republics are famed for their gratitude — and the multitude learn to discriminate."

These were the days of her almost nervous fear lest America might sigh for monarchy. January 4, 1787, she had written her husband from Milton, discussing the state of a nation "Emancipated from a foreign yoke the Blessings of peace restored on the most Honorable terms, with the liberty of framing our own Laws, Choosing our own Magistrates & adopting Manners the most favorable to Freedom and Happiness. I am sorry to say there is too much reason to fear we have not Virtue sufficient to avail ourselves of those superior advantages." She goes on: —

"The Glorious Fabrick which you and your compeers with so much labour & assiduity successfully Reared may totter to the foundation before the civil feuds are Hushed that have justly allarmed the Continent & the Massachusets in particular. — Lately armed for an opposition to Regal Despotism, there seems to be a boldness of spirit on the one side that sets at Defiance all authority Government or order. And on the other not a secret Wish only but an open avowal of the Necessity of drawing the reins of Power much too taught for Republicanism if not for a Wise & limited Monarchy. —

The Cause of the late Commotions may be easily investigated but the Consequences must be left to the hand of time. Where abouts the political ship will Land it is not easy to say though I think the Rioters in the Western Counties will soon be quelled. But some think the Cincinnati who are waiting a favorable tide to waft them on to the strong fortress of Nobility are manifestly elated by the present prospects. others are flattering themselves that our Aristocratic power is fast forming. While many of the younger Class particularly the students at Law and the youth of fortune & pleasure are crying out for a Monarchy & a standing army to support it — yet perhaps a termination more favorable to the system of the Genuine Patriot than has been apprehended may still take place."

In 1787, she writes Mrs. Macaulay in the same very evident distress. The Cincinnati especially inspires her, as it did from the beginning, with a vivid alarm: —

"These joined by the whole class of Cincinnati who are panting for nobility; and with the eagle dangling at their breast, assume distinctions that are yet new in this Country — these parties make a formidable body ready to bow to the sceptre of a king, provided they may be the lordlings who in splendid idleness may riot on the hard earnings of the peasant and the mechanic: — These plead the necessity of a standing army to suppress the

murmurs of a few who yet cherish that spirit of freedom which only calls forth the exertions and leads to the best improvement of the human mind."

Mrs. Warren was ever an excellent republican. True worth had, in her mind, no relation to rank or station. In 1774, a time when she could write that, in twenty years of housekeeping, death had not entered her family, an old servant, who had been with her for at least nineteen years, was taken ill and died. Mrs. Warren attended her so faithfully that her correspondence had to be neglected; and her sorrow over the woman's death was very keen. This is her observation on the event: —

"Unimportant as one in that station appears yet when they have acquitted themselves faithfully and fulfilled the duties of life the distinction between the master and the servant, the prince and the peasant may be in favour of the latter."

In 1789, she writes: —

"It is true we have now a government organized, and a Washington at its head; — but we are too poor for Monarchy — too wise for Despotism, and too dissipated selfish and extravagant for Republicanism. — It ill becomes an infant government whose foreign and domestic arrearages are large,

and whose resources are small, to begin its career in the splendour of Royalty: to shackle its Commerce, to Check its manufactures, to damp the spirit of agriculture by imposts and excises, and in short to deprive the people of the means of subsistence, to amass sums for the payment of exorbitant salaries, to support the regalia of office and to keep up the ostentatious pomp for which the ambitious have sighed and desired from the moment of the institution of Cincinnati."

To recur to Mrs. Warren's literary life is to find a strangely familiar ring in one circumstance belonging to the year 1791. Evidently American publishers even then not only sailed under the black flag of piracy, but cheerfully elected to do so. She had received from Mrs. Macaulay Graham a pamphlet written by that lady, and which, so Mrs. Warren says, was composed of "ingenious and just observations on Mr. Burke's strictures on the National Assembly of France." It seemed to be entirely unknown in Boston, and General Warren proposed to Andrews, the printer, that he should republish it. And thus Mrs. Warren writes the "celebrated" author: —

"Profit is not yet a stimulus with American authors. The printer was rather unwilling to undertake the republication lest it might not sell in our degenerate day, but on assuring him the

risque was small, that the profit if any should be solely his, and only the honour yours, he agreed to strike off a number of copies."

Thus early was the division of profit and honor in the case of an author who could make no legal claim upon us.

There is something lovely in the picture of General Warren and his wife, now old people, at their fireside, still eager over the intellectual life, and looking forward to the life immortal. Their affection never failed. Each is to the other still the most desirable of humankind, and the General has not ceased to be guardian and lover, as well as friend. Sally Sever is one of the younger generation of whom Mrs. Warren is especially fond; and this little confidence was written to her: —

"Alas! it is late in the evening and candlelight very unfriendly to weakened eyes, yet mine are not so impaired as to forbid the attempt. But you know the kindness of my good Mr. Warren — 'My dear it is bedtime — *you will be sick in this way — you must not write so much in the evening — I cannot spare those eyes,*' &c &c &c."

In 1797, the aged couple (Mrs. Warren now nearing her terminal threescore and ten, and her husband having passed it) take a little

trip together, and her ever-youthful spirit rises in response to the stimulus from without. Not much younger than her husband in years, she is infinitely so in feeling. She describes the journey in writing her son George, then in Maine, and dwells movingly upon the renewal of old associations in the home of her youth: —

"He thought it a mighty business for *us old folks* [she adds, in spirited allusion to General James], but it was a pleasant little jaunt: — we both enjoyed it and are the better for the exertion. If he could view these things just as I do, I think he would soon be with you."

If everybody had viewed things just as Mrs. Warren did, throughout her entire life, the cause of moral empire would have moved faster.

Her affection for the young was genuine, tinged with no patronage, but animated rather by a generous respect. She seems always to have been touched by any expression of their admiration and love for her, and to feel that it must be a good sign when age could commend itself to youth. Mercy Warren had determined to have no shackles upon her mind and spirit. She would grow while life was left her; she would keep in touch with

the new generation to the very end. In one of her moral disquisitions, after enlarging upon the duties of the young, she continues: —

"At the same time the aged who have experienced the afflictions, the disappointments of the world, who have seen the ingratitude, the baseness, the versatility of human conduct, should be careful that his own mind does not become so soured by defeated expectations as to behold everything through the gloomy medium of discontent — he should be watchful that he indulge no morose feeling towards the new generations that arise: — let him cherish with Candour & good humor every spark of worth in those younger than himself in knowledge & experience instead of denying any excellence that may appear in a different garb from that to which he may have been accustomed. It is discouraging to the exertions of virtue & disgusting to the feelings of the heart when age will not allow merit in younger life because not exactly squared to the standard of his happier days. The sum of virtue may remain nearly equal among the generations of men in spite of external habiliments & fluctuating opinions — Yet political & evil institutions & the commotions that frequently result therefrom, may at different periods be more or less favorable to improvements both in knowledge & morals. But under no form of government, changes of time or caprice of fashion, can the individual be released from the obligations above-mentioned.

This mutual exertion to contribute to the happiness of others would pare down the reluctance & take off the restraint so often observed in the interviews between the young & the old — improve the understanding on one side, increase the Cheerfulness of the other and strengthen the benign virtues of both."

To one who has traced this woman's life, there must be something singularly pathetic in the change which came over it with age. You begin by admiring her intellectual gifts and her force of character; finally it is her gentleness by which you are chiefly impressed. She has always been strong in affection, but toward the end it has become a yearning devotion which was once quite foreign to her. Life, to a less vivacious, less persistently cheerful temperament, might now have seemed hopelessly circumscribed. She had a great deal of time to think; and in one of those moments devoted to letter-writing appears a spice of her old satirical habit. It was still left her in age. The letter, written December 22, 1792, is addressed to her brother, Samuel Allyne Otis, and it contains this sly little paragraph: —

"The gentlemen of this and the neighbouring towns had an elegant entertainment in public, at noon, and are now regaling themselves at the old

Colony hall by invitation from the Club, while their dames are left alone both afternoon & evening to reflect on the difference between modern manners and the rigid virtues of their ancestors, or any other subject that solitude may suggest."

She begs her friends to write to her, to visit her. On December 28, 1807, she writes Mrs. Adams: —

"The great debility which has long afflicted my eyes has & still deprives me of the use of my own pen, nor is it easy to express the effusions of friendship, or the sensibilities we feel on any other occasion, when we borrow that of another. This with the death of very many of my best correspondents has almost broken off the habit of Letter-writing in which I once so much delighted:

"Should I ask M^r^ Adams what he thinks the Emperor Napoleon was made for? I presume he would not tell me."

That is a question of unfailing interest. The retired patriots were never tired of tossing it back and forth. They seem to have agreed excellently that Bonaparte had some use in nature, chiefly as a lash for the flagellation of Europe. Here is the calm and philosophic opinion of Dr. Freeman, written to Mrs. Warren: —

"The events which have taken place in Europe during several past years have been of so painful a

nature, that for some time I have turned from them with disgust, & have forborne to look at them. I now seldom read a newspaper; and am therefore but ill qualified to give an opinion on publick affairs. In general, however, I have no doubt that the government of the universe is in wise hands; that what I contemplate with pain, as well as what I contemplate with pleasure, are necessary to the good of the whole; and that heroes, murderers, hypocrites, & usurpers, and Napoleon among the rest, like earthquakes, volcanoes, and pestilences, are essential parts of the system of divine providence. When I read the past events of history, where I can see both the beginning & end, this truth forces itself on my mind; and I cannot but believe that Nebuchadnezzar, & Alexander, Caesar, & Charlemagne were raised up by God to effect the purposes of his wisdom and goodness. Amidst the passing events the heart is afflicted & bewildered with the rapid succession of crimes and miseries; but judging from analogy, I believe that when the whole transaction is completed, posterity will be able to discover that it was right; & that Bonaparte was as useful an instrument in the hands of the Supreme Being, as any of the conquerors and tyrants who preceded him. What are the particular purposes which are intended to be effected by this extraordinary man, & whether he is especially destined to restore the Jews to their own country, it is impossible to conjecture. The prophecies, I believe, afford no light to assist our

conjectures; because, in my opinion, they never become intelligible until they are fulfilled."

Mrs. Warren seems to have agreed with him. Napoleon was the instrument of God, no less divinely meant in that he was apparently evil.

A letter written to Mrs. Adams, in the summer of 1807, touches on the same question, and ends with a solemn note of reminiscence, as that of one who sits by a dying fire, and hears the lonesome wind without. Here she prophesies that Napoleon may be allowed to go on "to be the scourge of kings and of nations," and she adds: "I sometimes amuse myself with the fanciful idea of listening to a long political conversation between the two venerable sages, your husband and mine: — but it seems to me to resemble the fabulous dialogues of the dead."

"Death," she says solemnly, when his presence touches her more nearly, "death is a familiar word."

But she was not the slave or even the intimate of discontent. "I still possess all the necessaries, most of the conveniences, & some of the Luxuries of life," she wrote. "I have an elegant habitation, a good fire, plenty of provisions, a healthy family, and a thankful heart. Yet —

"'Do not Friendship's joys outweigh the whole?
Tis social converse animates the soul.'"

One spiritual grace possessed in great measure by these stern-fibred men and women was a serenity of faith in "final good." For them there was no whining of pessimism. They had mounted far enough, not to lose sight of the clouds, but to know they lay below. In the very last year of Mrs. Warren's life John Adams wrote her in a strain which she could have echoed: —

"A gloomy philosophy, or a more melancholy religion, disposes men to misery and despair; but a more cheering confidence in the wisdom and benevolence that governs the universe ought to dispose us, not only to submit, but to make the best of every thing.

"I can neither applaud nor approve of the lamentations over 'Few and evil days,' 'Days in which there is no pleasure,' 'Vale of tears,' 'Miseries of life,' &c. I have seen no such days, and those who think they have, I fear have made them such by want of reflection."

But in 1808 came the greatest affliction which Mrs. Warren could possibly feel, — the death of her husband. To the last he was tranquil and resigned, proving himself no less capable of estimating his own life than events which were external to him. He had done

his duty simply and manfully; he had finished his course. There is much dignified nobility in what he said, a few days before his death, to a friend who encouraged him with the thought of recovery: —

"I do not expect ever to recover more health. The season of the year is against it; my age is against it. I have had a long life, and have enjoyed a thousand blessings. I have uniformly endeavored to do my duty; I think I have generally done it, and wherein I have erred, I shall be forgiven. If death should make its approach this day, I should not be alarmed."

Mrs. Warren's very silence is thereafter suggestive. She still writes her friends, though by an amanuensis; but there is no very tragic outbreak over this one worst affliction of all. It was too great for tears. Moreover, time, so far as she herself was concerned, must have begun to seem to her a gift likely to fall from the hand at any moment. The letters belonging to the last years of her life are very sweet, very loving, full of peace and anticipation; yes, full even of the old courage: —

"We are hourly expecting the depredations of the British," she writes, June 30, 1814. "I would not have you think me alarmed by womanish fears or the weakness of old age.

I am not. I sit very tranquilly in my elbow chair — patiently awaiting the destination of providence with regard to myself, my family, my friends & my Country."

"I think I do not murmur," she writes, not long after. "I see the light of the Sun . . . I have recollection — I have hope."

In the same year came the death of her brother, Samuel Allyne Otis, a blow severe enough to render her tremulous.

"As to myself," she writes, "I feel daily bending down to the tomb under a weight of years and infirmities, — yet considering my age am remarkably well. . . . The recollection of a visit made me a short time before he went on to Washington has been & will be a source of comfort to me. Yet I recollect his going backward to the door, getting into the carriage, & fixing his eyes upon his Sister as she stood at the window looking at his intelligent Countenance where she thought she read in every feature that he never expected to behold her faded countenance again in this world."

Again she writes her sister-in-law, Mrs. Otis, in August of the same year: —

"Pray for me that I may follow your example though late but not insensible that this ought to have been done in the days of my affliction when

my younger friends had a right to look up to me to exemplify by my own conduct what I so much applaud: perfect resignation and fortitude under the severest trials of a transient life.

"... Do let me hear from you soon & often. — I frequently feel as if I loved my friends if possible better than ever. — Is it because I am about to leave them, or is it because the circle is so circumscribed that when I retrospect the rich treasures of social life which I once enjoyed, I only find one, two, three or four, and then look into another state of existence where our excellent departed friends are gathered."

She kept her mind and memory to the last; and by some happy chance many of her relatives were with her during the concluding weeks of her life. It was a renewal of the bonds of blood and friendship.

"It seems to me," she said, "as if my friends were clustering round me for the last time."

Her illness was short, and one of her last messages went to the dearest friend of all: —

"Tell my dear Mrs. Adams to pass two hours with me," she said to Dr. Freeman. "If that be not possible, to write one more letter to her friend whom she will soon meet in heaven."

She died on the morning of Oct. 19, 1814.

"Saturday & Sunday," wrote James, "her pain was agonizing and distressing — to my astonishment on Monday Morning she got up from her bed to her breakfast table — but it was a momentary effort — she in a few minutes returned to her bed from which she never again rose. On Tuesday she seemed more comfortable. At eleven o'clock of that evening we went to bed without any immediate apprehension." At two o'clock he was called into her room; but before he could reach her she had died.

This was the good son who declared in the first freshness of grief over her death, that the last fifteen years of his life had been "devoted to the every wish of my dear mother. But," he adds, "I have not done enough."

Mrs. Warren was buried in the family tomb at Plymouth, as were all her immediate family who died at home. There she lies on Burial Hill, close by the church where she sat under the preaching of Chandler Robbins and Dr. Kendall. Plymouth is not rich in memories of her. She seems, save in her unconscious influence from the "choir invisible," to have slipped quite away into the unseen. Her great-granddaughter has a few pieces of her china, a screen, and some beautiful silver candlesticks, her lace, two hair bracelets made

to fit a very slender wrist, and best of all the historic card-table,— inherited through the little granddaughter Marcia, for whom the Alphabetical Maxims were evolved. The card-table is not only a curious relic, but is possessed of a quaintness and beauty indicating a delicate artistic sense in the woman who designed its decoration. It is of a goodly size (wrought out of solid mahogany) and was intended for the game of loo. The lifted leaf discloses a top of canvas, worked in worsted and silk stitches fine as tapestry, according to a truly unique and charming design of flowers. And Mrs. Warren was indebted to no conventional hand for her pattern; she gathered the flowers from her garden, pressed them, and copied them with her needle. They are all effective, and some of them very true to nature. Her ground is in two colors, green and brown. A gorgeous bouquet lies in the middle of the canvas, and an encircling garland about the edge. Between the two, thrown carelessly on the green foundation, are several cards, wrought with admirable exactness, and the similitude, in the form of disks and fishes, of counters once in the possession of the family. The whole is a triumph of patience and artistic skill; and if many of those careful stitches were set by candlelight,

there was more than poetic justice in the "humour" which attacked my lady's eyes. These, with an extraordinarily fine silver tea-kettle at Dedham, are the authentic personal belongings of Mercy Otis Warren.

The living representatives of her line trace their descent through her son Henry. None of the other sons married, and of the two who survived her, James (who became post-master in Plymouth) died in 1821, and Henry in 1828.

It is not easy to compute the influence of Mercy Otis Warren. By no public word of hers, no definite deed to be traced to her hand or brain, can it be sufficiently indicated. And because she was a woman of rich domestic life, as well as public effort, let what George Eliot said of Dorothea be recorded also of her: —

"Her full nature, like that river of which Alexander broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts."

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